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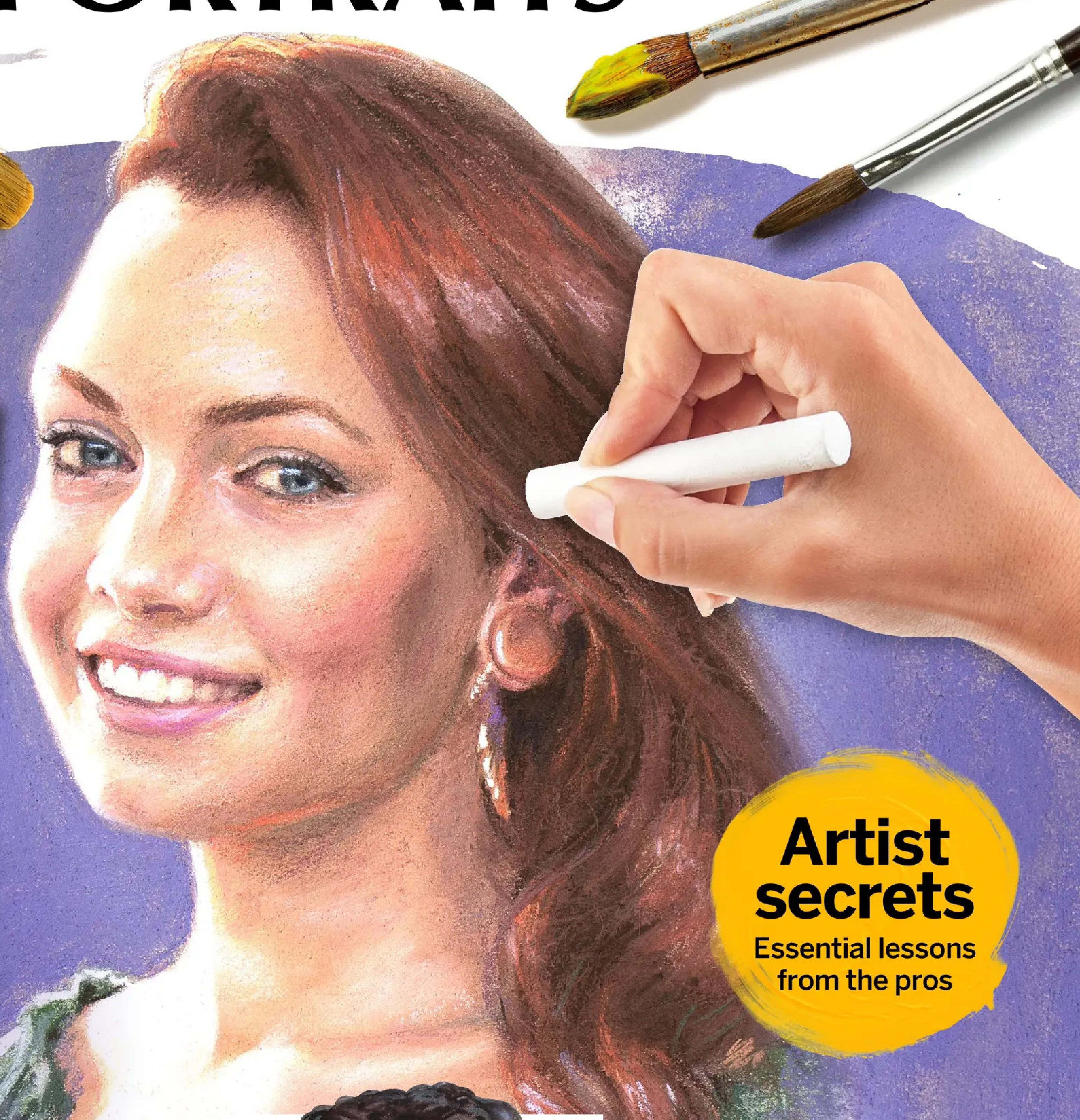

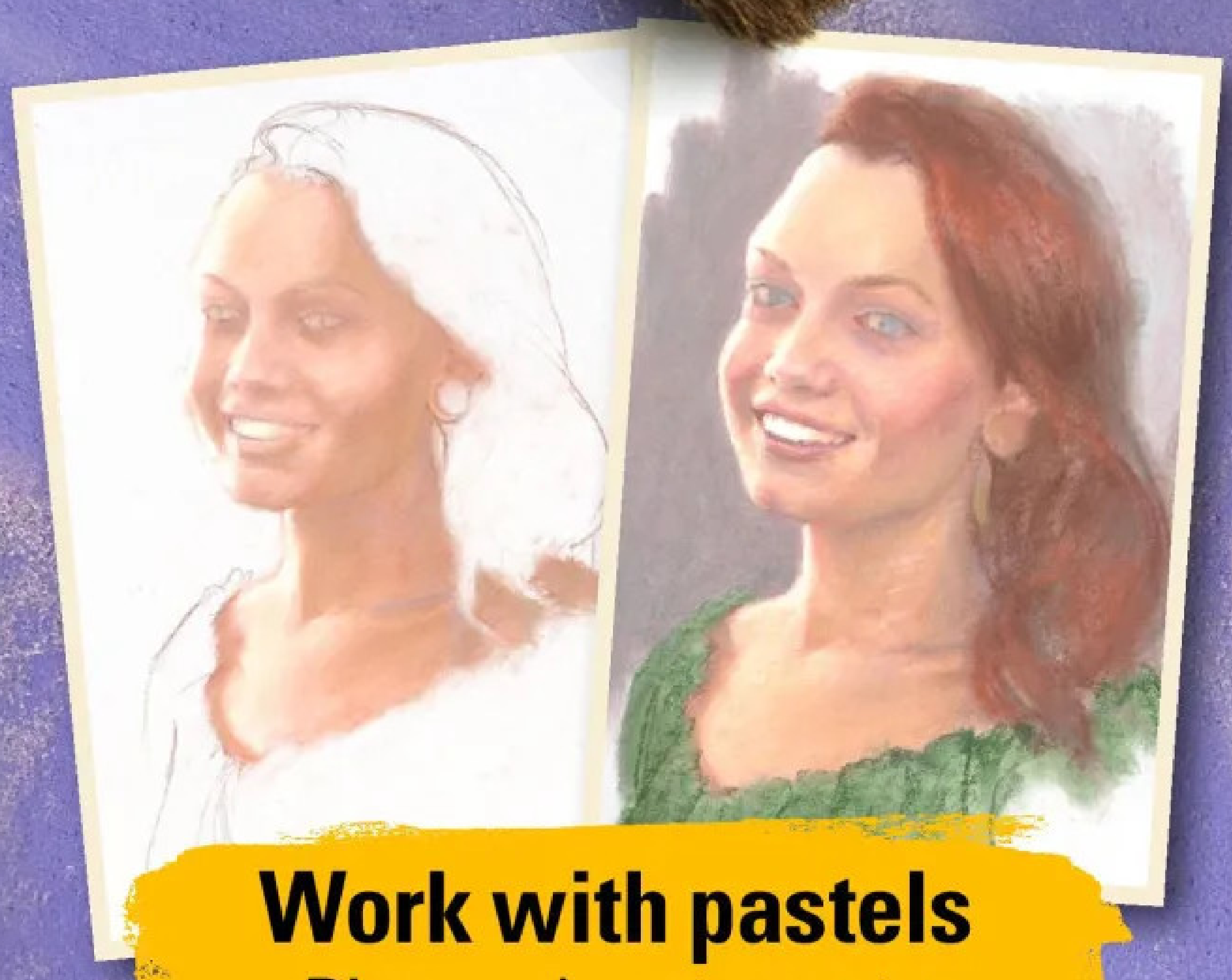

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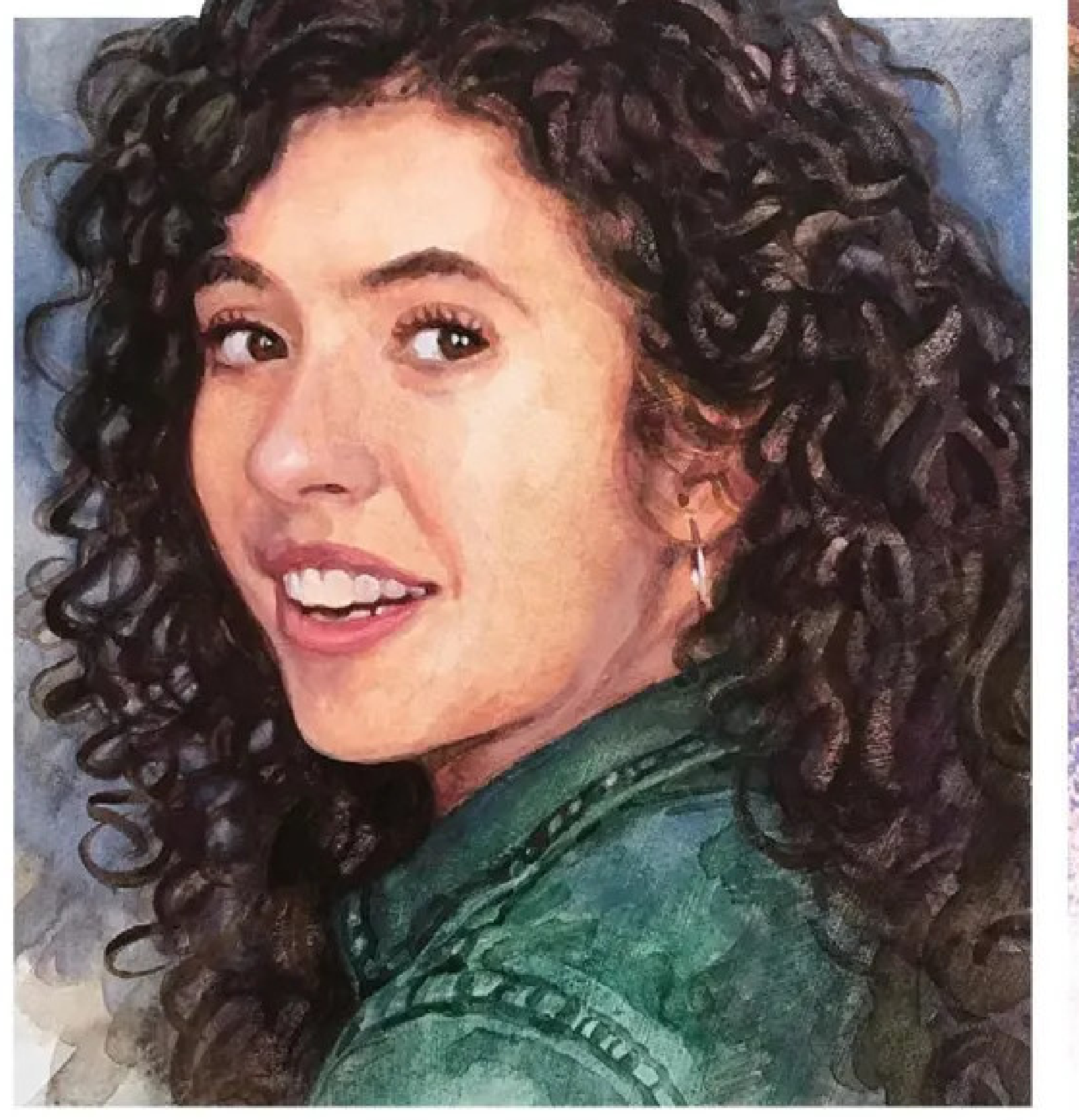

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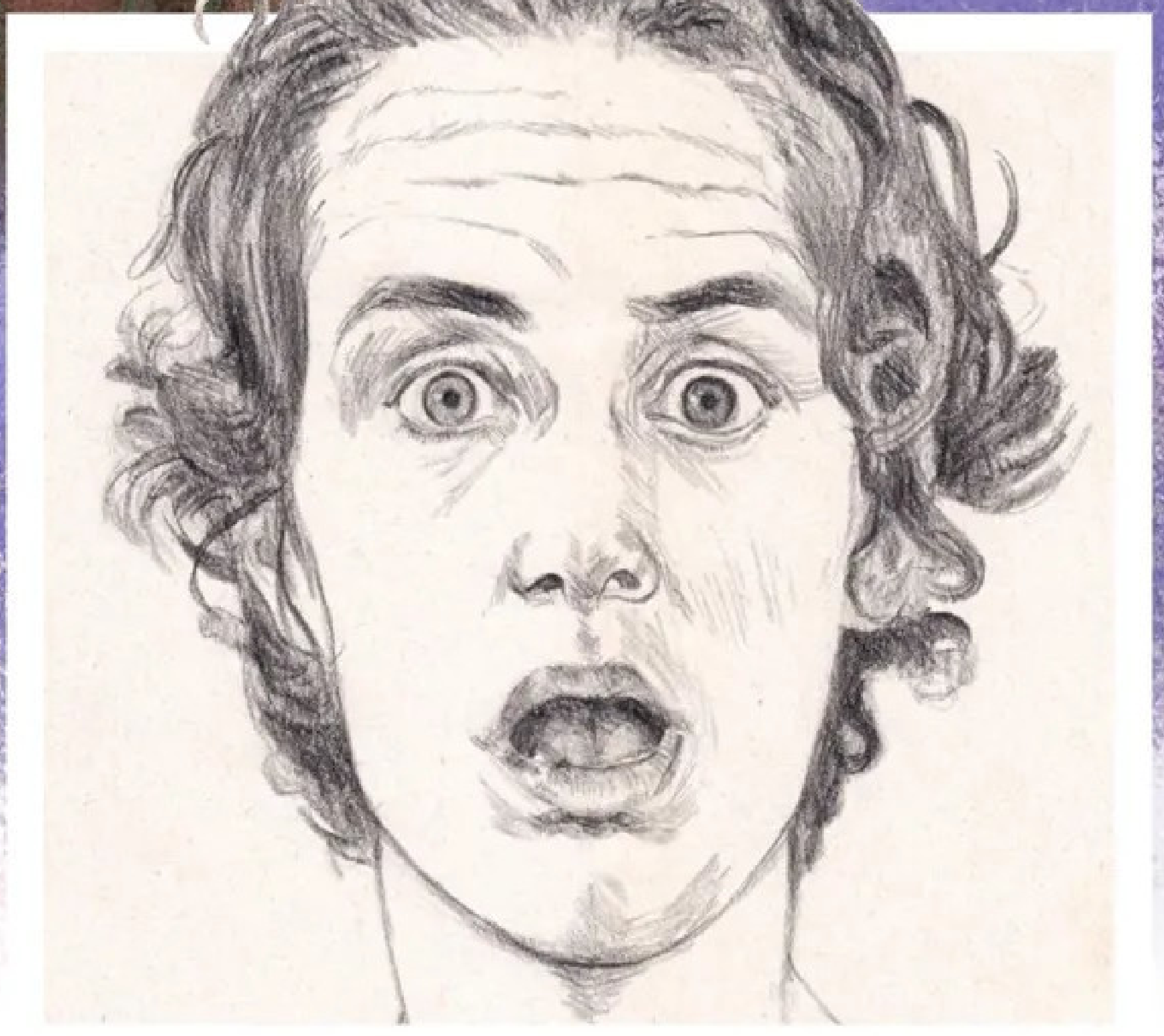

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It's often said that the eyes are the window to the soul – so how you depict them can make or break your portraits. In this brand-new book, find out how to re-create the human face, from accurately depicting skin tone and complexions to how to add soul and personality to your portraits.

Over the following pages, our experts will share their secrets for achieving realism in your faces, from how to capture emotions from surprise to anger, to exploring how to realistically illustrate different types of hair. Elsewhere, explore our step-by-step projects to capturing people in various mediums.

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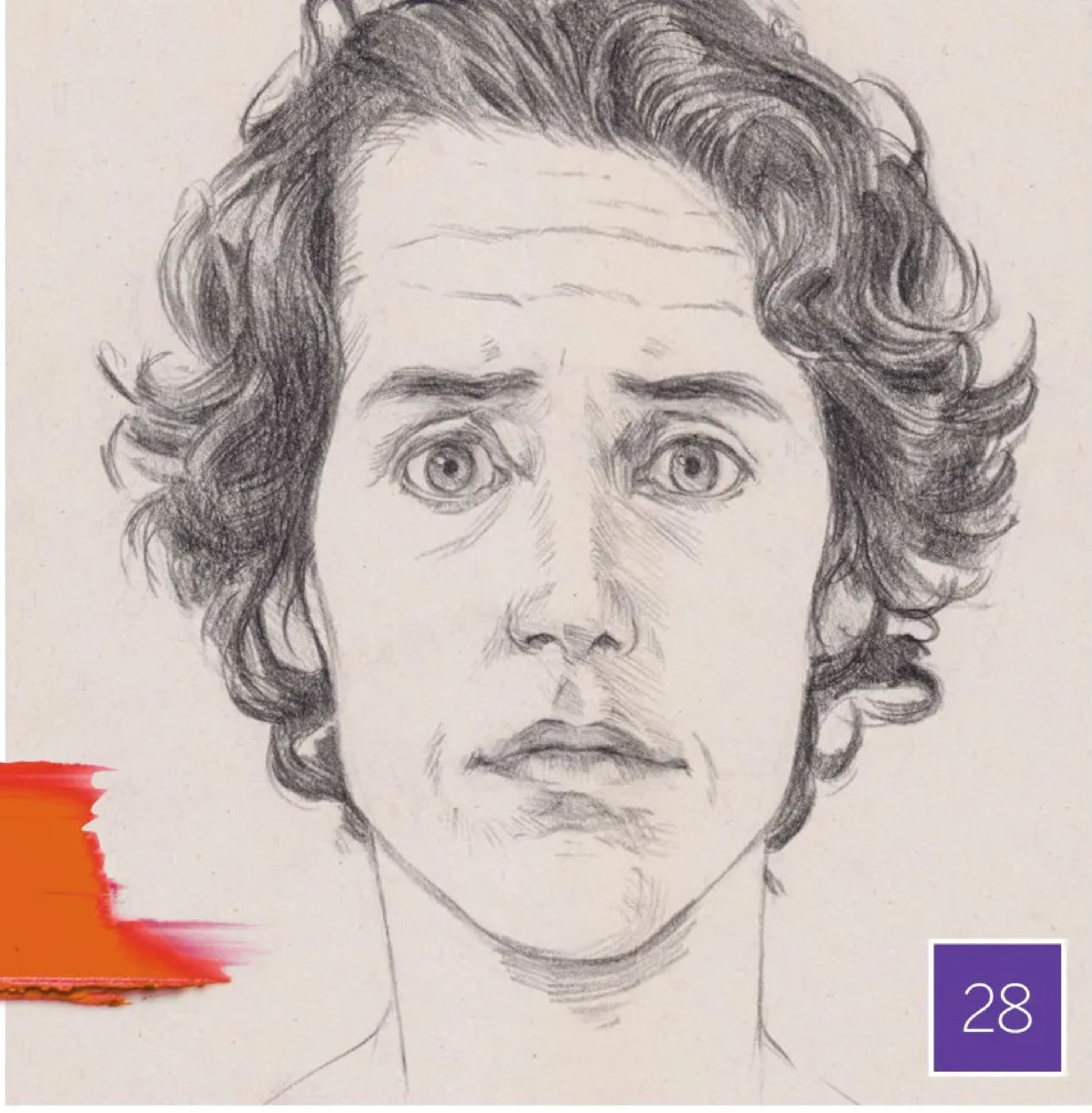
Contents

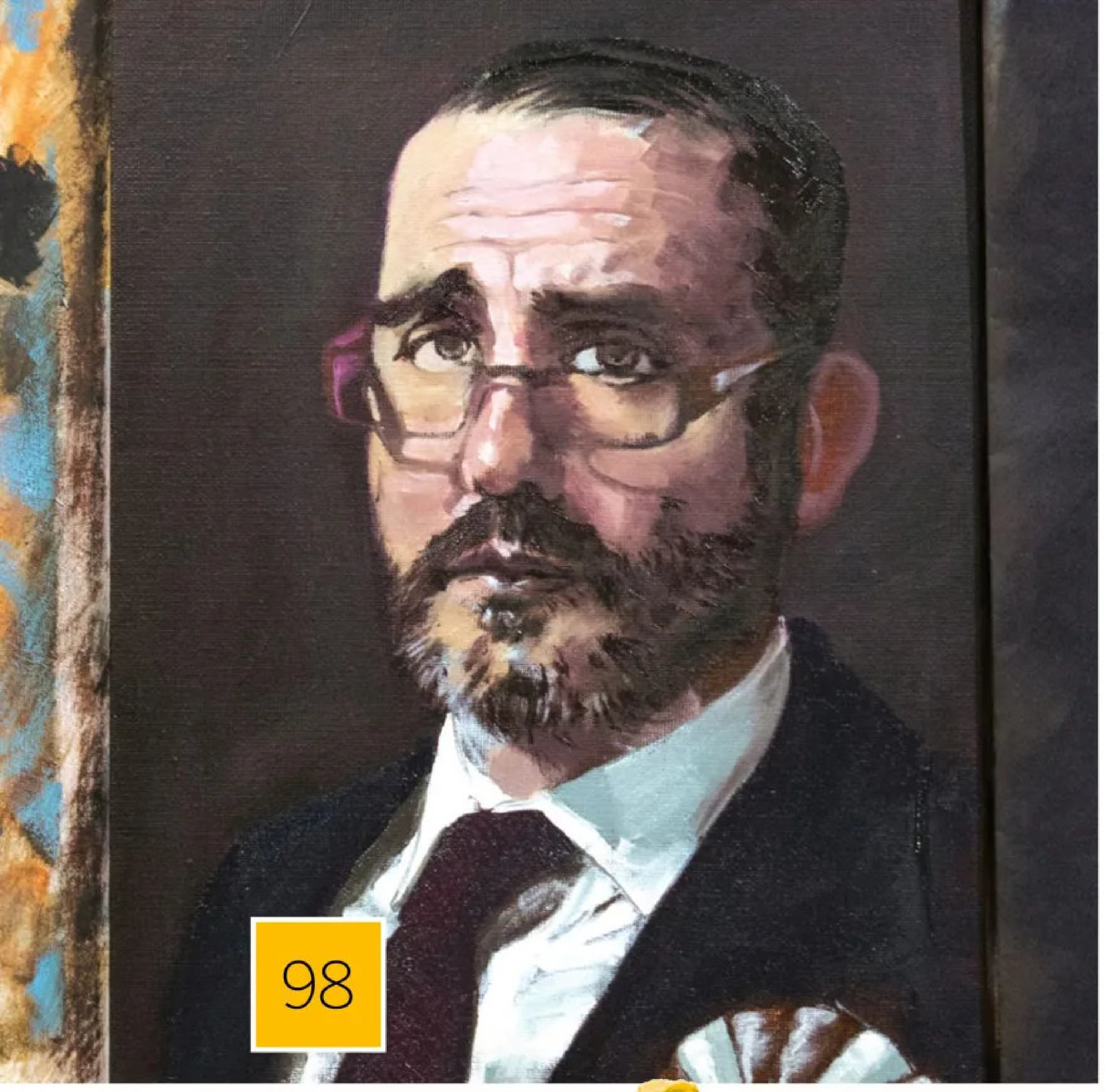


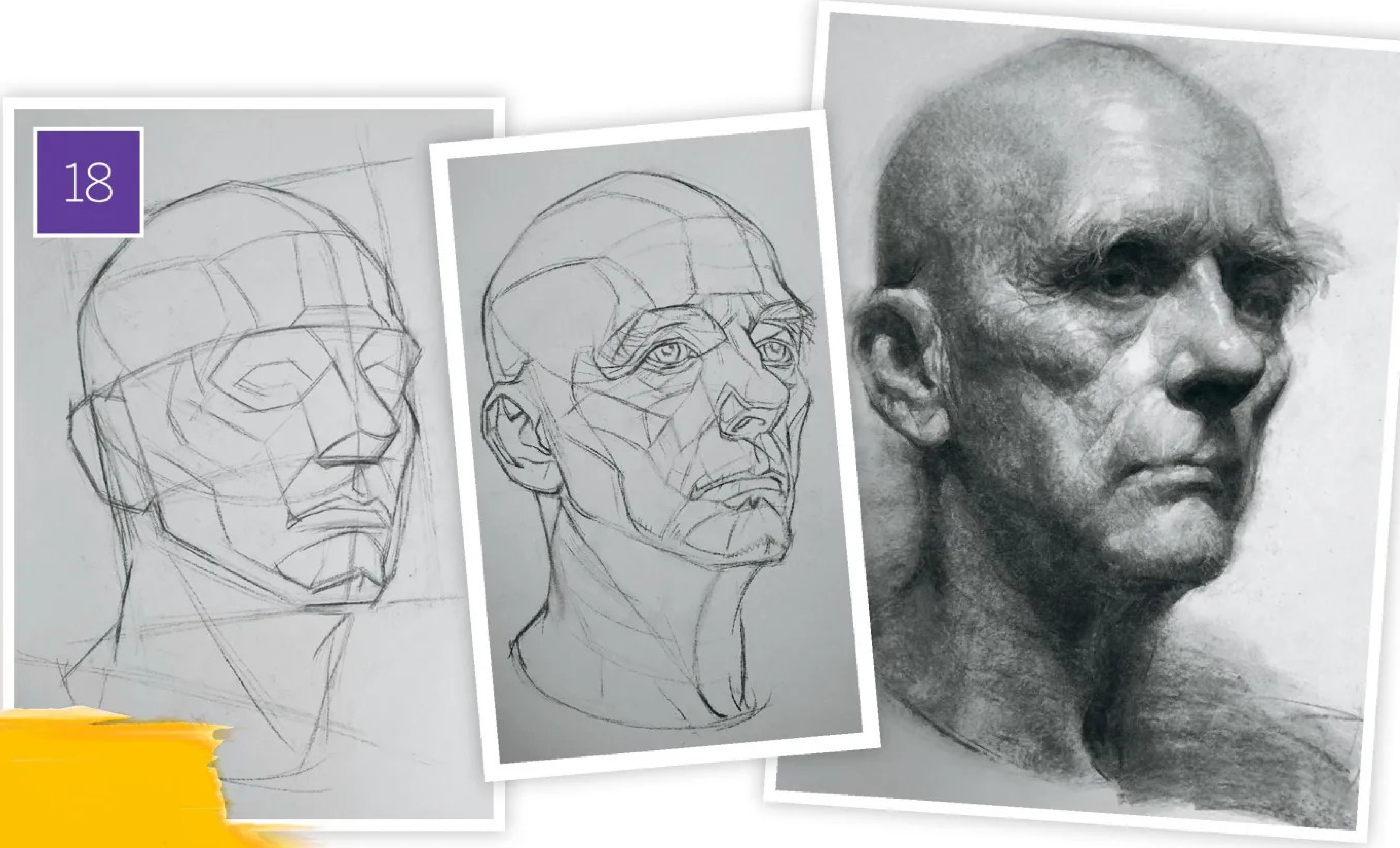
108
◀ Create striking portraits

86
▼ Emotive portraits in watercolour

The sketch

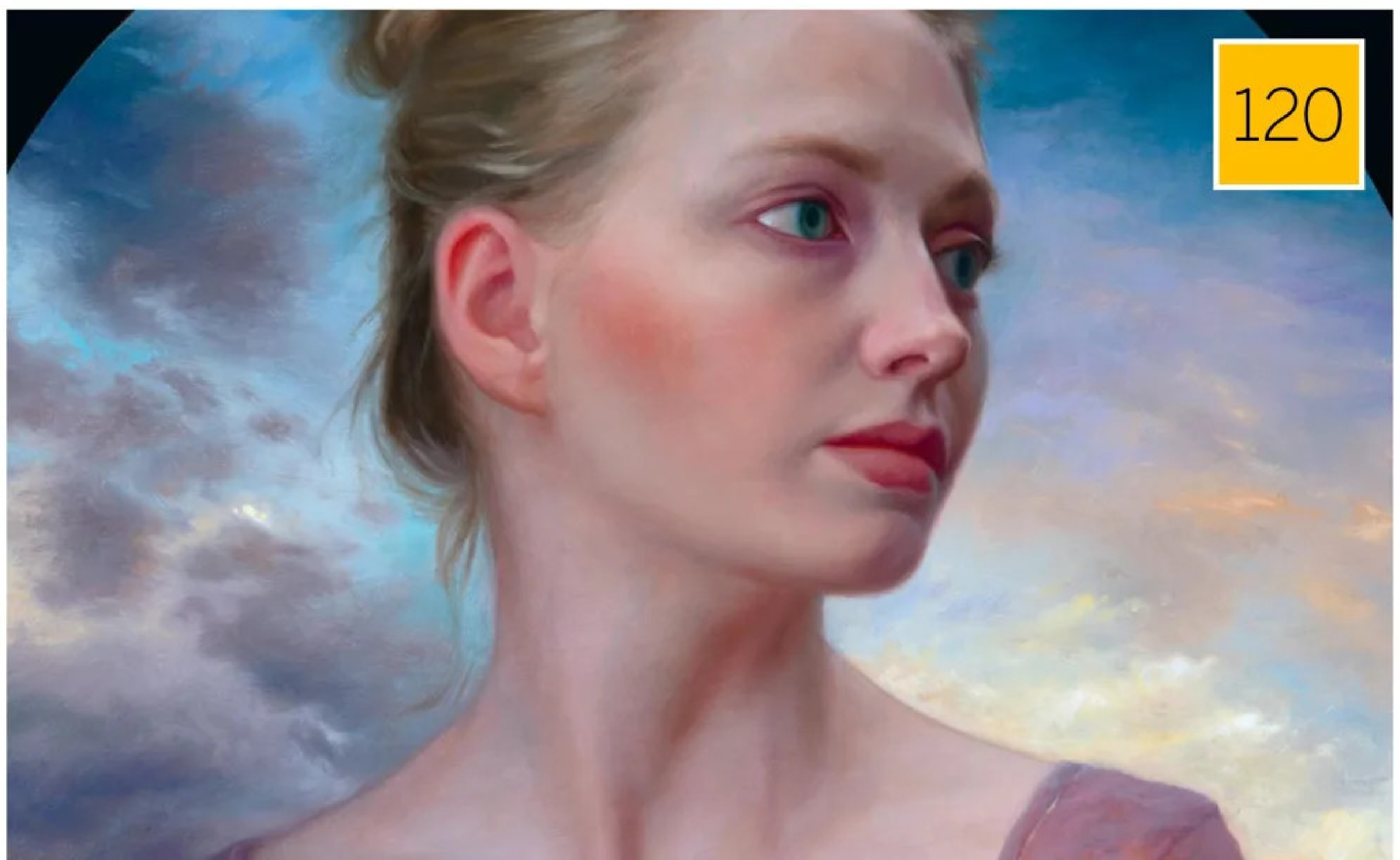
10 How to sketch the head
18 15 tips on drawing realistic heads
28 Animate the face
36 Drawing different types of hair
42 Develop a self portrait

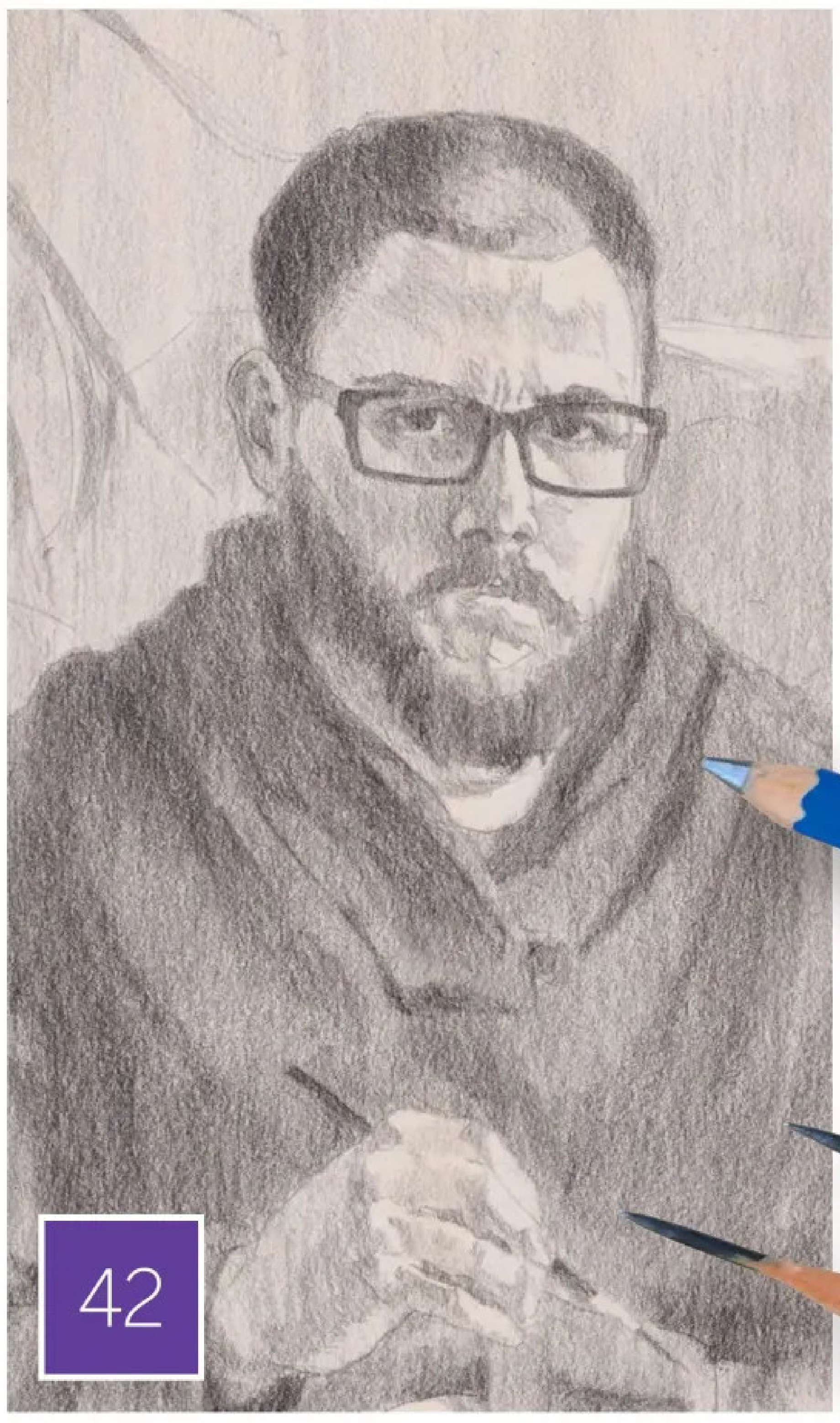

98


18

Tutorials

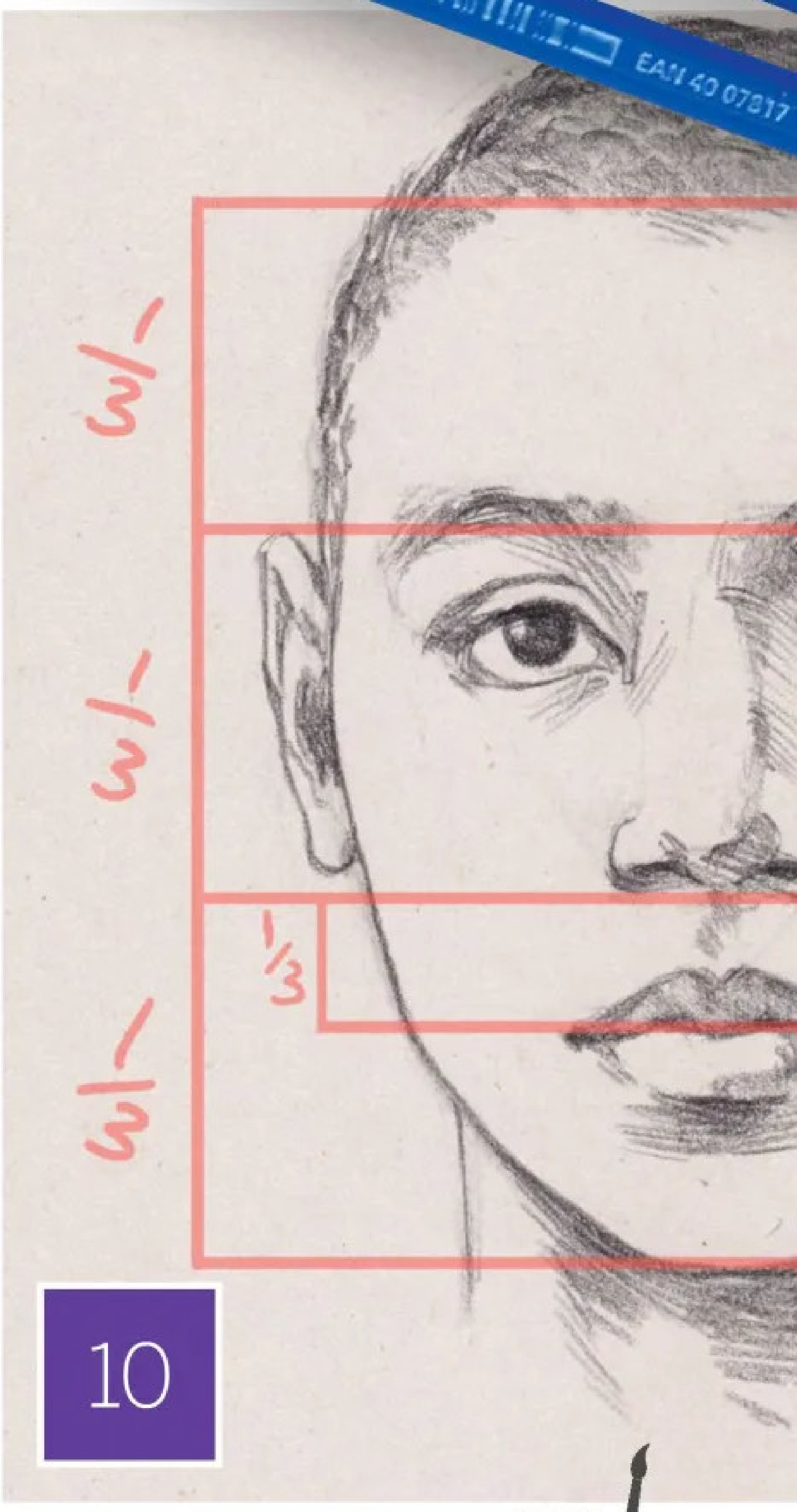
50 Going simple with gouache
56 Paint like Van Gogh
62 Get creative with acrylics
68 Experiment with colour for dynamic oil portraits
76 Capture movement
80 Working with a limited palette
86 Emotive portraits in watercolour
94 Create more interesting skin tones with acrylics
98 Paint like Caravaggio
104 How to paint a nose
108 Create striking portraits
116 How to paint realistic eyes
120 Paint a classically inspired portrait


120


42

18
15 tips on drawing realistic heads

50

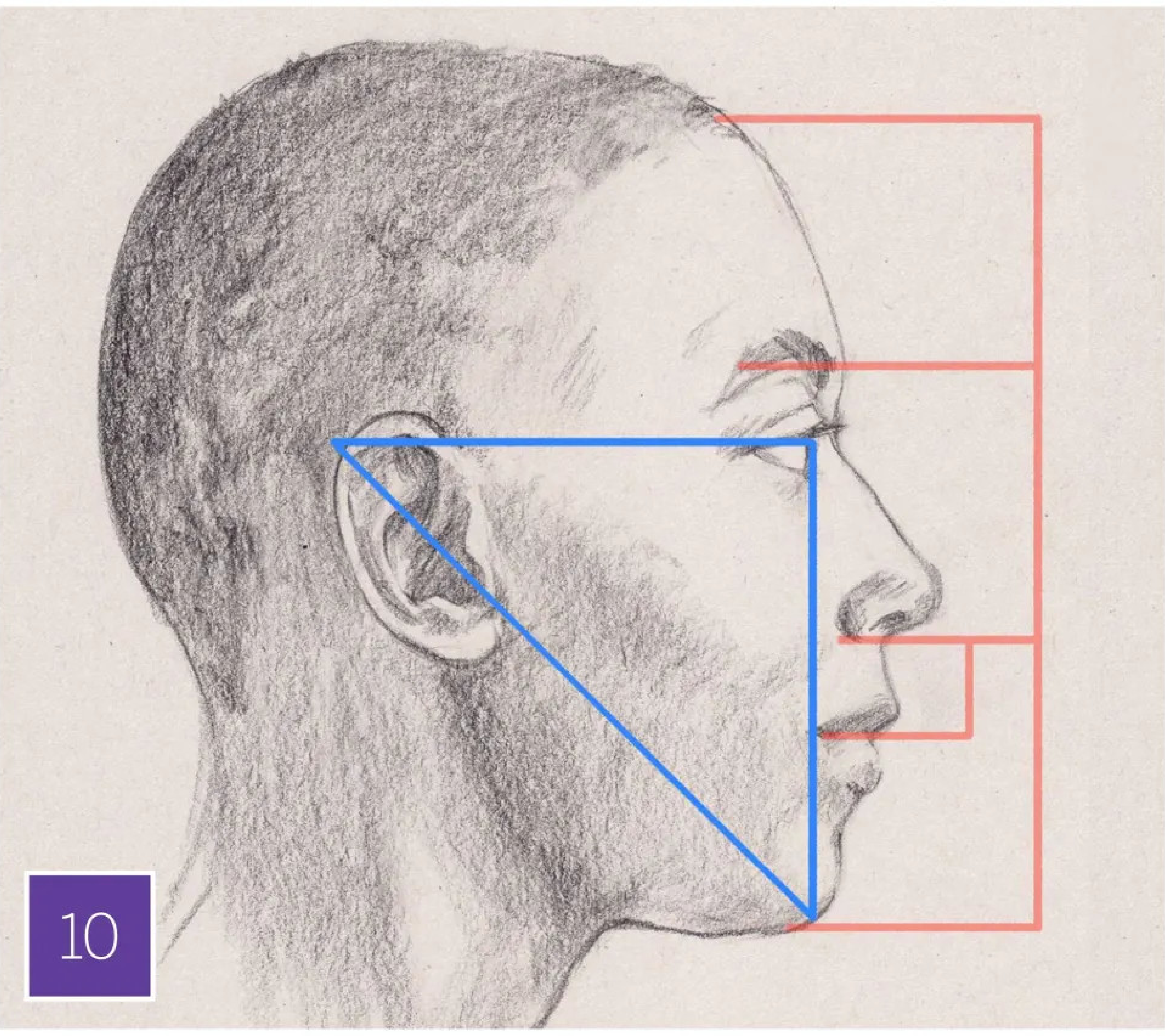


10

The sketch

10 How to sketch the head
18 15 tips on drawing realistic heads
28 Animate the face
36 Drawing different types of hair
42 Develop a self portrait

18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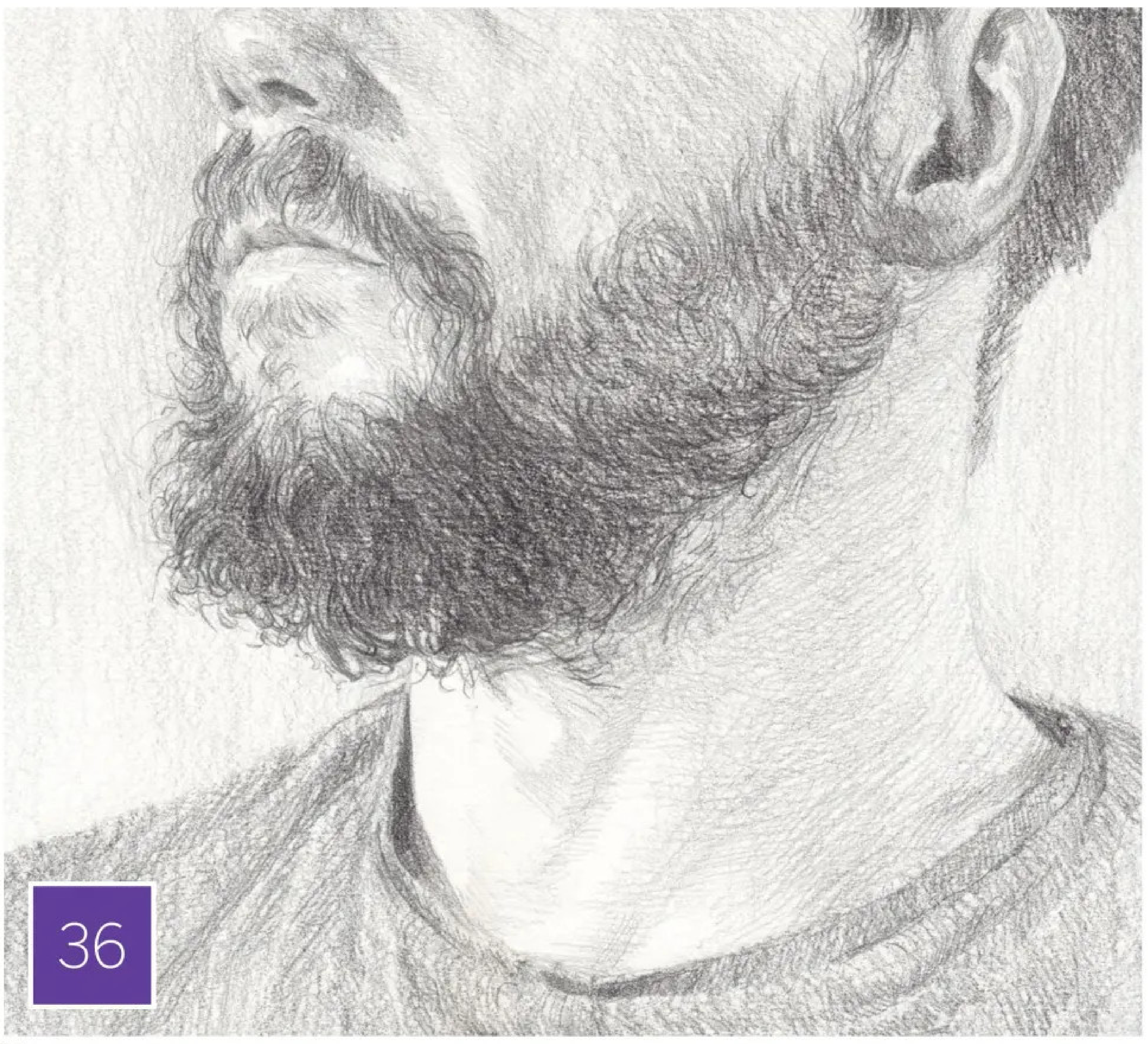
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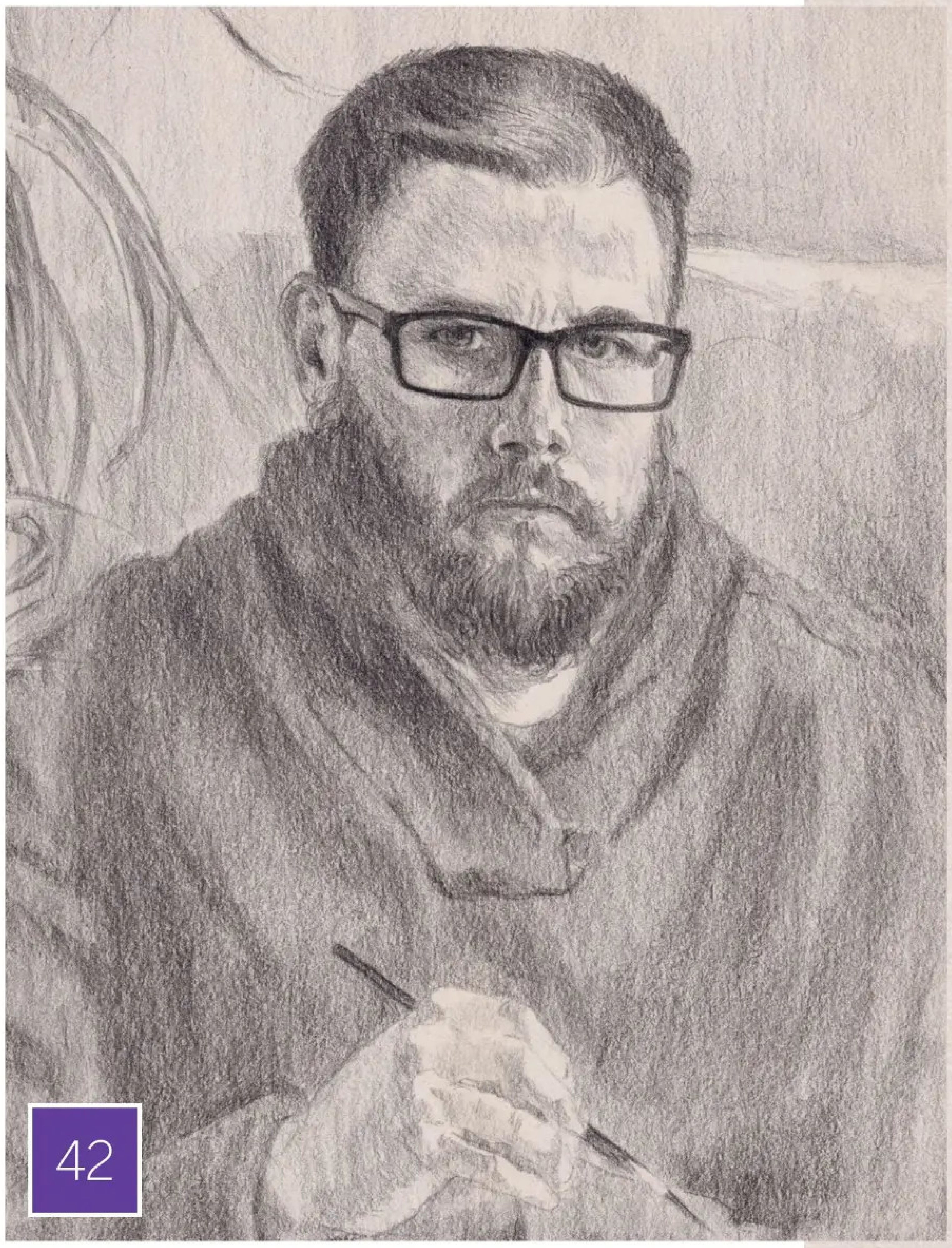

42

28

How to sketch the head

Lancelot Richardson details a process for drawing the head, including from different angles, and how to draw the features

About **LANCELOT**
Brighton, UK
Lancelot Richardson is a painter and freelance illustrator. He also works at independent drawing school Draw Brighton as a life drawing tutor. Alongside life drawing, he also teaches imaginative drawing techniques there.
www.lancelotrichardson.com

Materials

- ☐ Seawhites newsprint paper
- ☐ Conté Pierre Noir B pencil
- ☐ Kneaded eraser

The head is an important part of the body, as we love to look at faces and will usually look at the head first when viewing a drawing. Because of this familiarity, coupled with the complexity of the features of the face, we are ruthless judges of portraits and will notice even the smallest of mistakes. The posture of the head is also important when drawing the figure because it adds interest to the pose, as well as indicating intent, especially in more dynamic poses.

There are a lot of potential tripping points, with proportion being a common complaint. I always recommend lightly roughing out where you want to place the features before delving into the details, so you can double check your proportions early on.

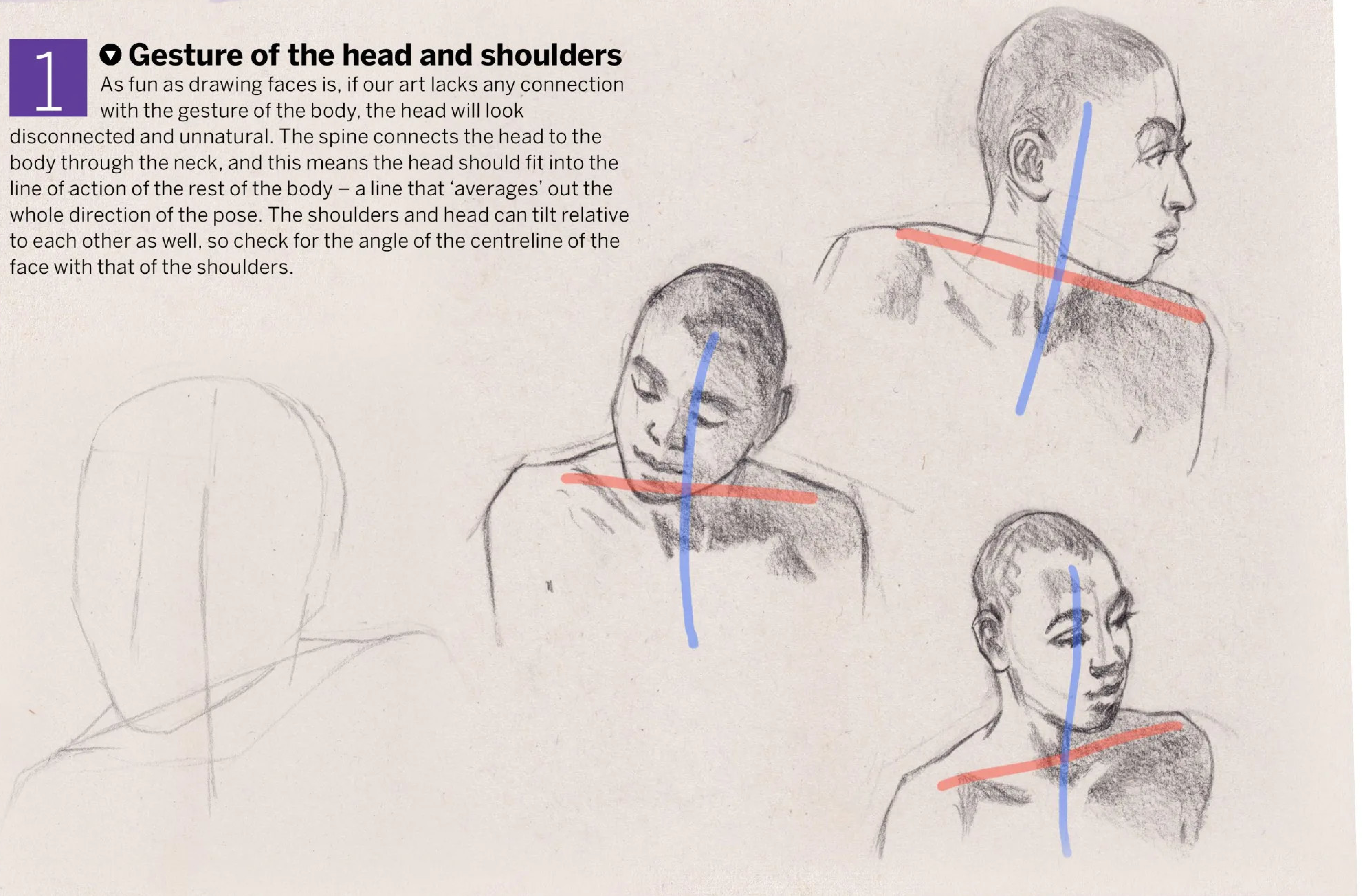
In particular, eyes have a tendency to come out a bit too big – we often draw things that are more important to us larger than they actually are. Another frequent issue is making the back of the head too small – humans have massive brains in there, so the back of the head takes up a far greater volume than the face.

As the head moves away from typical front and side angles into the wide variety of tilted and turned ones it can take, it can be challenging to get the placement of the features right, especially when foreshortening starts to compress the proportions that we are so used to seeing. Understanding the three-dimensional structure of the head is vital to drawing these, and go along way to helping your portrait drawings as well, so read on the learn how to re-create accurate heads.

1

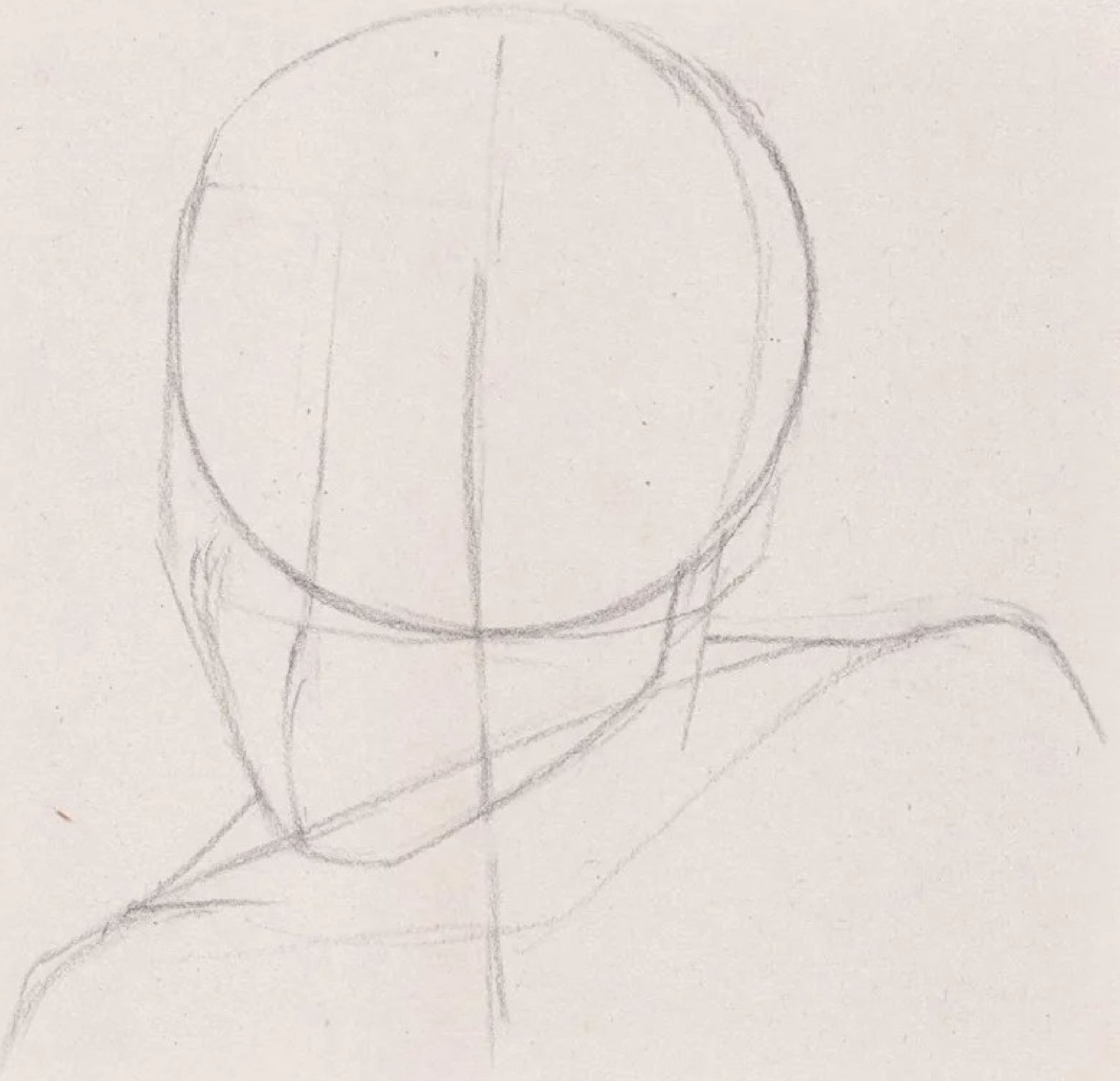
Gesture of the head and shoulders

As fun as drawing faces is, if our art lacks any connection with the gesture of the body, the head will look disconnected and unnatural. The spine connects the head to the body through the neck, and this means the head should fit into the line of action of the rest of the body – a line that 'averages' out the whole direction of the pose. The shoulders and head can tilt relative to each other as well, so check for the angle of the centreline of the face with that of the shoulders.



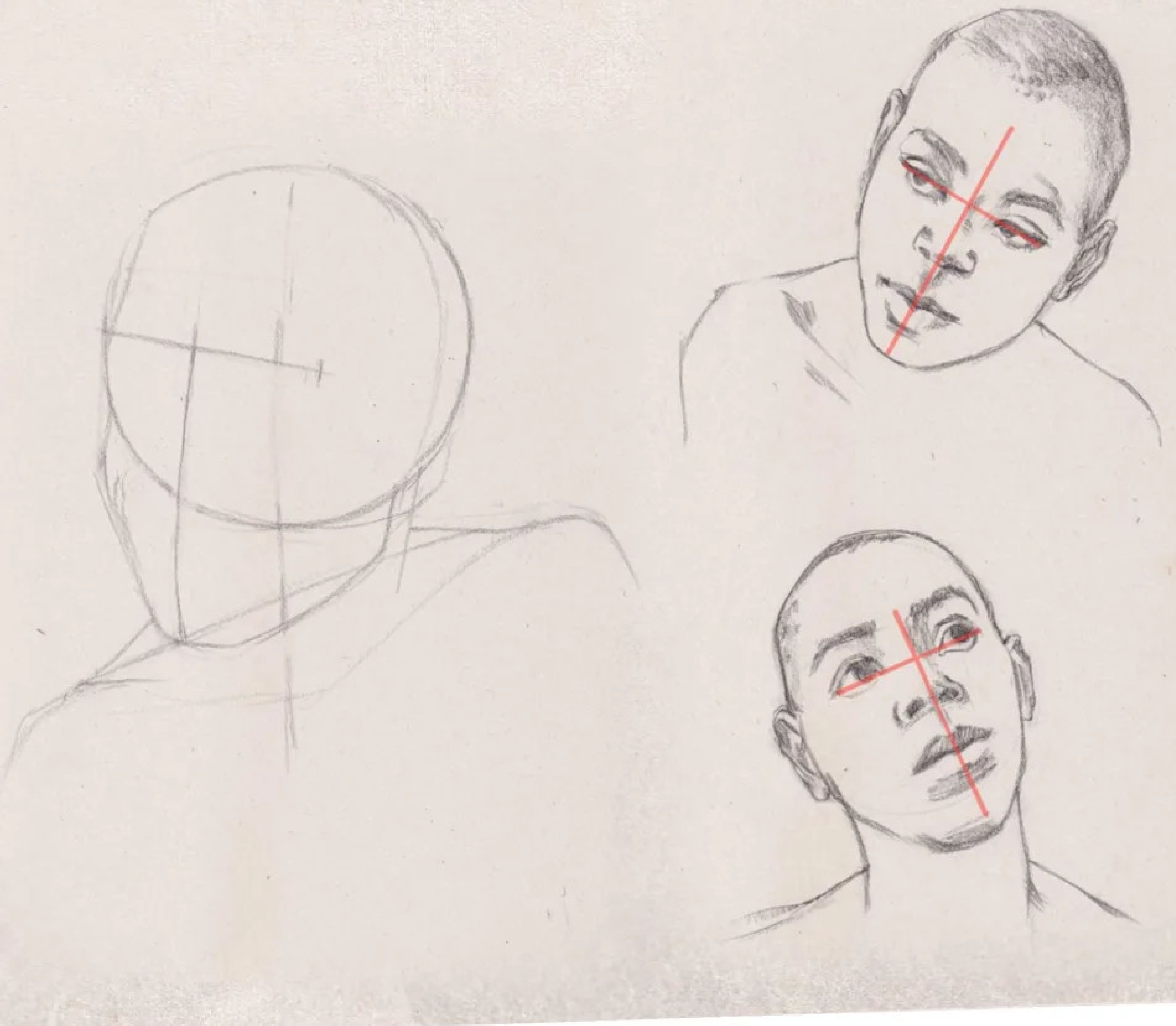
2 Simplified forms

The head is effectively a rigid structure with surface features, and it is a good idea to simplify it so that we can think about the three-dimensional behaviour as it tilts and turns. There are lots of options – the skull is neither a block nor a ball, but it can be approximated by either! Here I am using a ball for the top of the head and a wedge shape for the jaw. I find ball forms are useful as any line drawn on a sphere curves to its surface, helping describe the roundness of the skull.



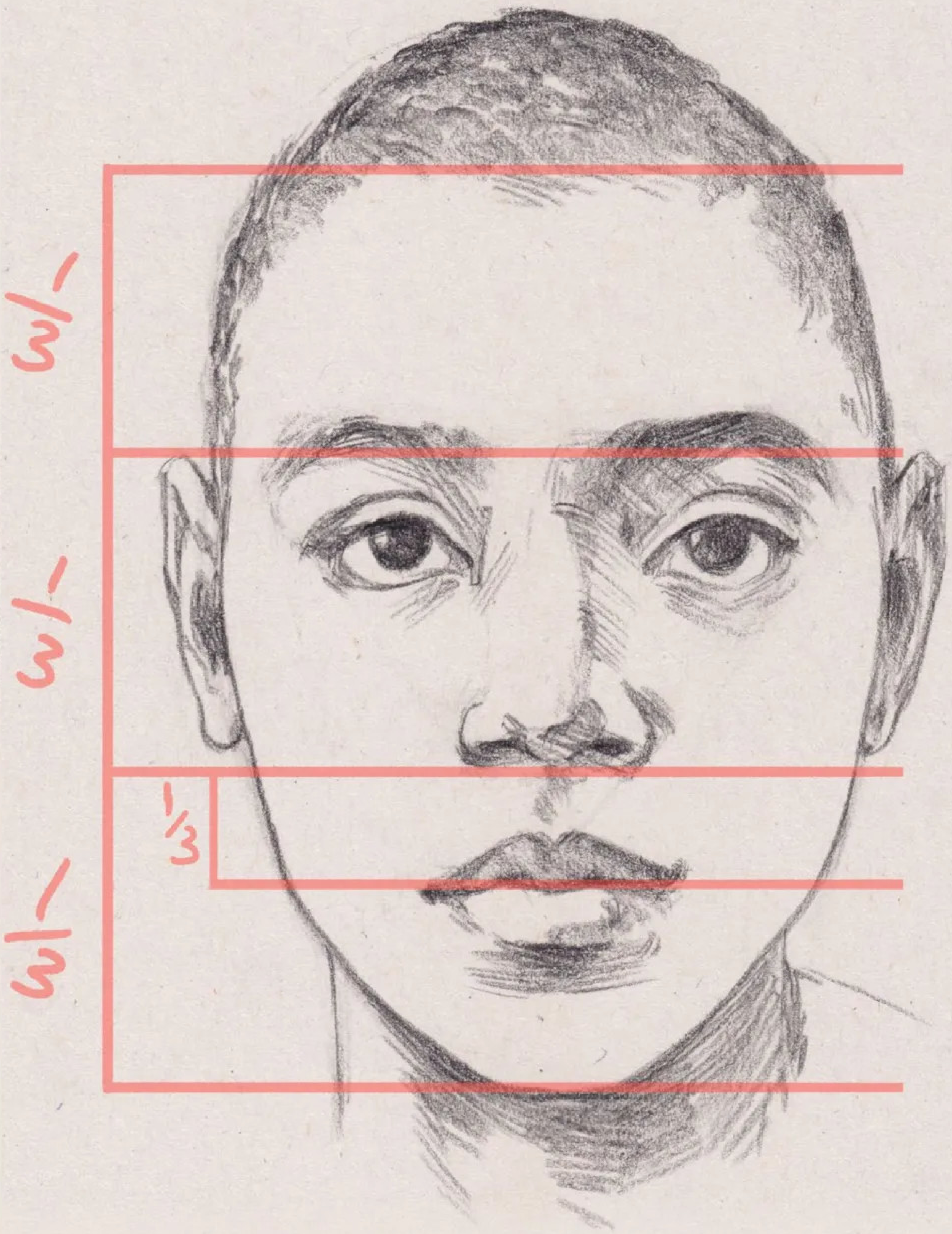
3 Crosshairs of the face

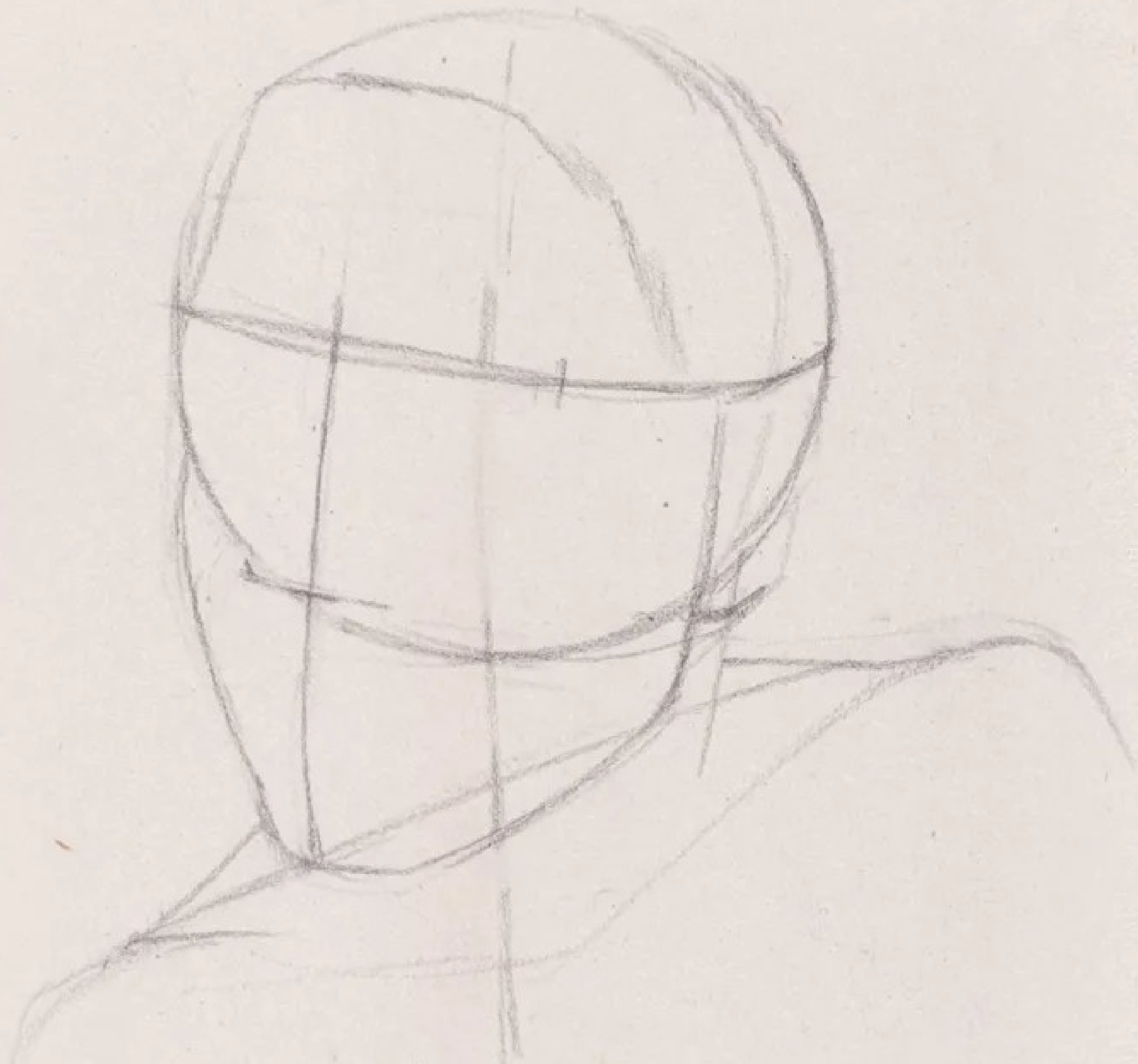
When laying in the features, placing a crosshair will help line everything up. The horizontal line can be used to mark out the placement of the eyebrows, while the vertical line represents the centre of the face. Try to use the top of the nose and the philtrum (the vertical dip in the upper lip) to find this. Check the angles carefully to avoid having crooked features. This is also useful in indicating which direction the head is facing.



4 Proportions of the face

It helps to indicate the placement of the features before actually drawing them in, otherwise our proportions may go awry. There are a lot of proportion systems to choose from – it is also worth noting that everyone has slightly different facial proportions, or we'd all look the same! Here I am keeping things relatively simple by first marking out where the hairline is placed, and then dividing the face into three at the eyebrows and base of the nose. I further divide the nose-chin space into three to place the mouth and the top of the chin.





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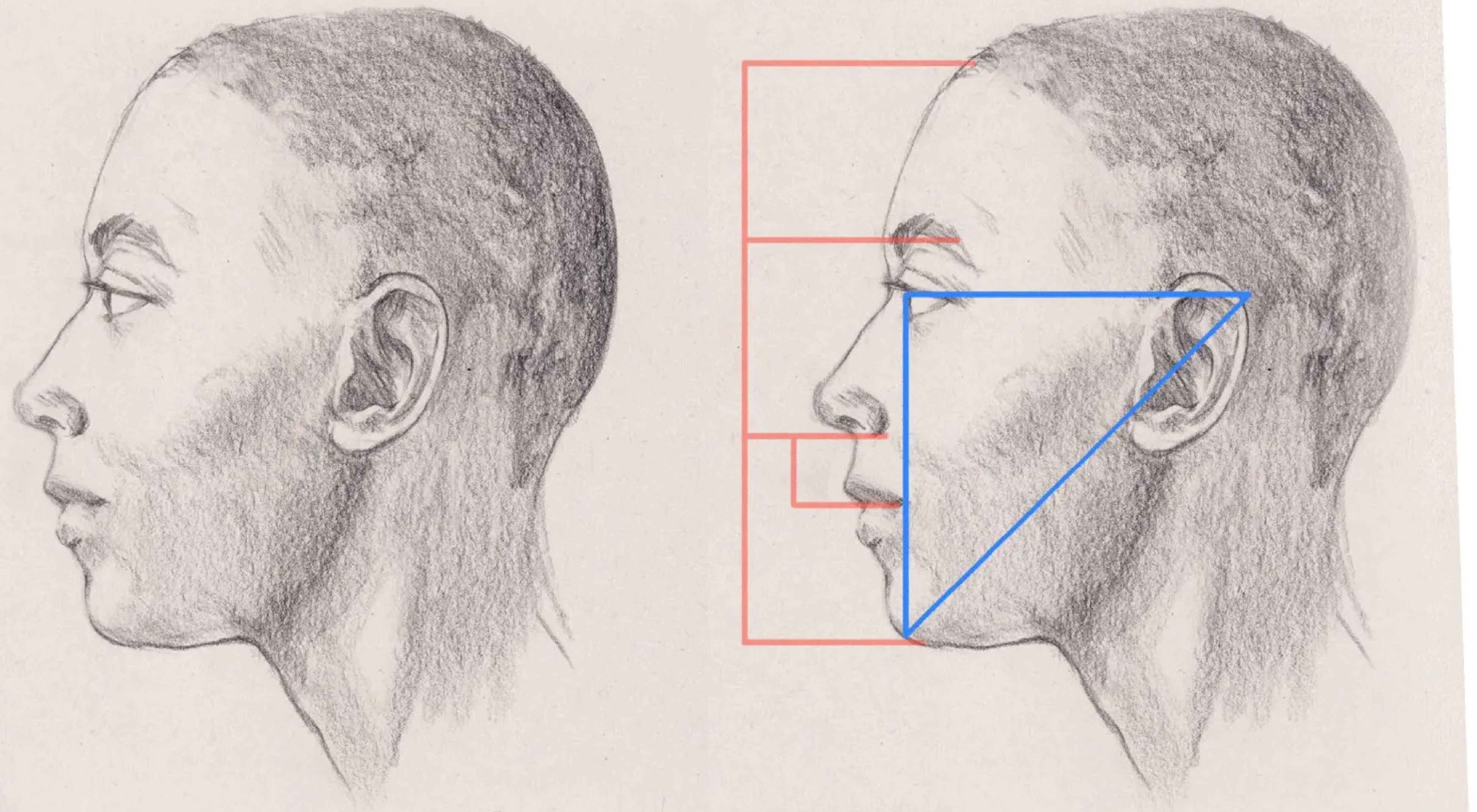

5 Proportion in profile

All the proportions for the features apply in profile views. The ear will usually lie between the eyebrow and the base of the nose as. A common problem that occurs at this angle is that the gap between the features and the ear gets compressed, as does the size of the skull. Try taking the distance from the corner of the eye to the chin, and rotating it 90 degrees – it should line up with the back of the ear.

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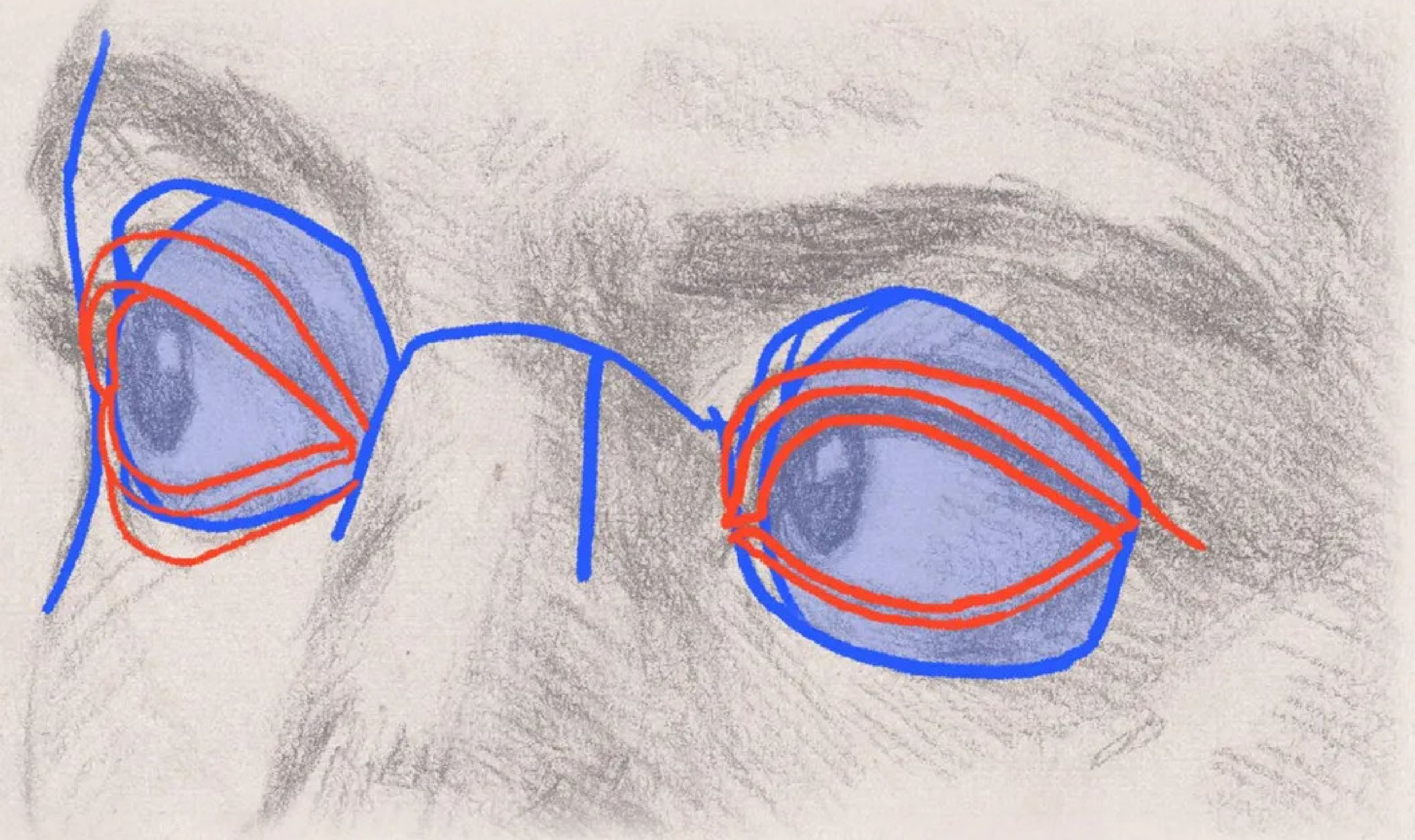
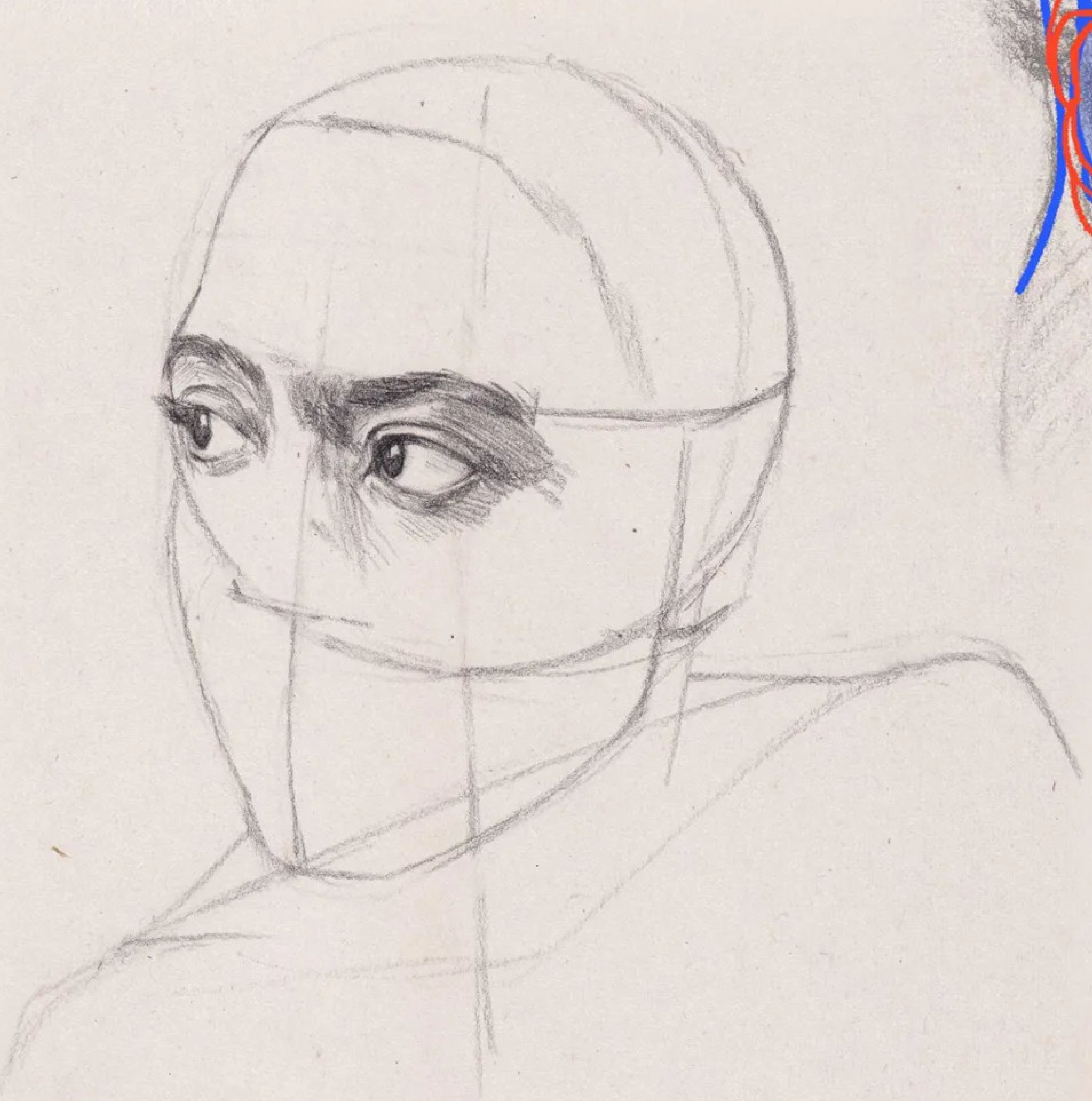
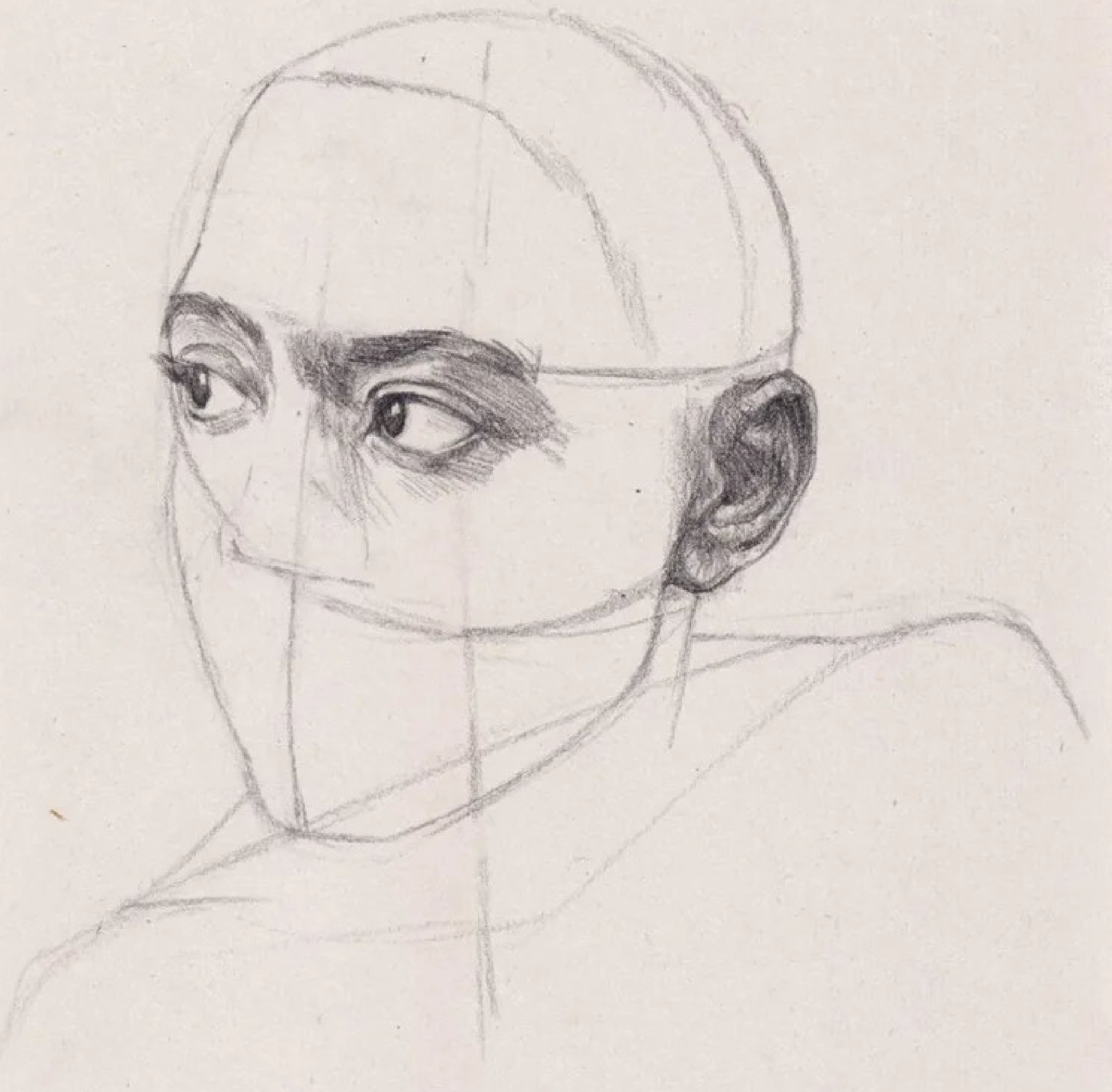
4B
5B

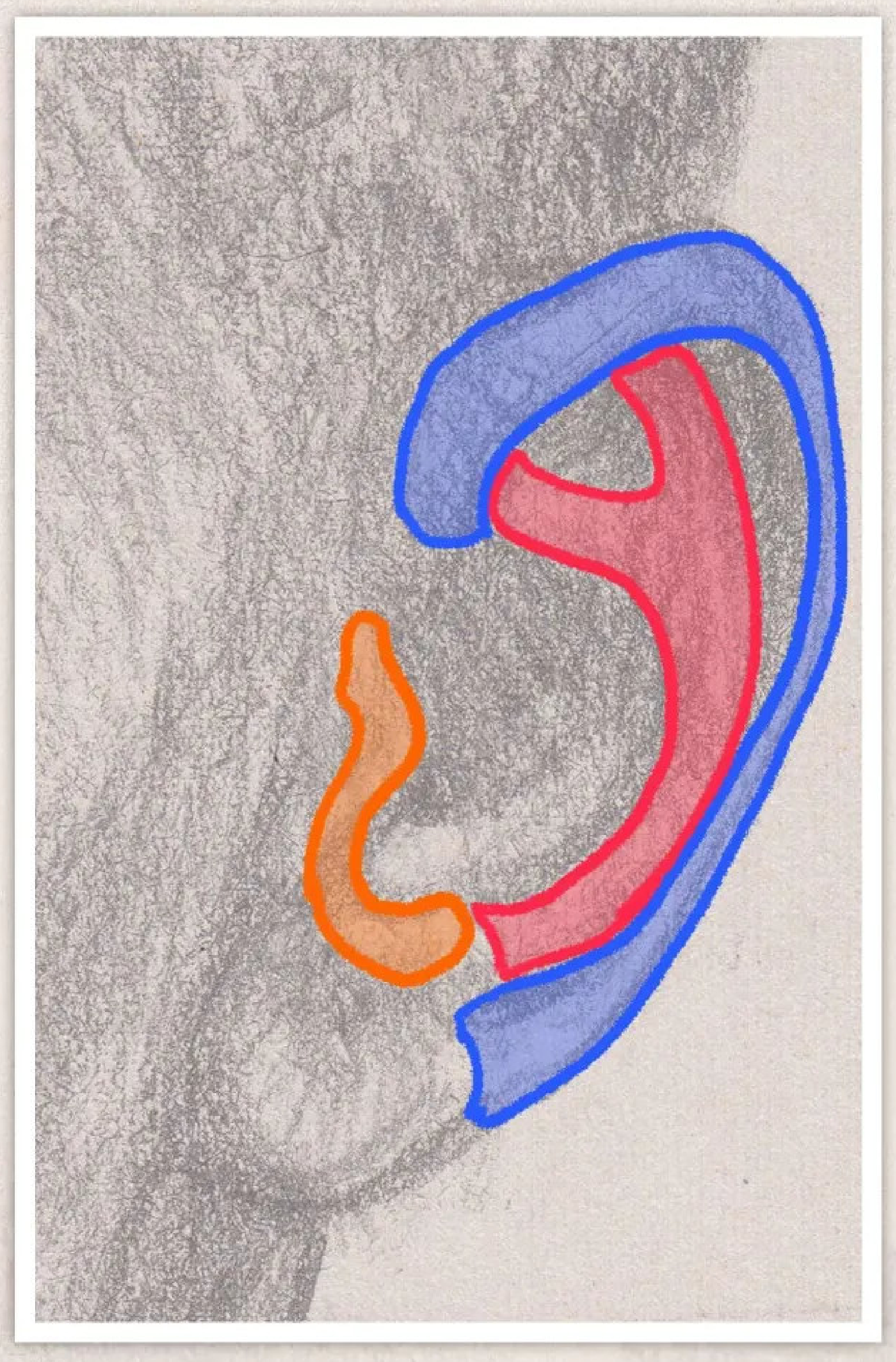




6 Eyes

The eyes occupy the top half of the space between our first- and second-third markers, nestling underneath the protruding brow line. When drawing the eyes, be mindful of the forms around them. The eyeball is mostly sunken into the eyesocket of the skull, so it is recessed in the face – not flat or protruding. Because it is a ball, the eyelids curve as they wrap around it. The eyelids have thickness, casting a tiny shadow from the upper lid, or catching a sliver of light on the lower lid.

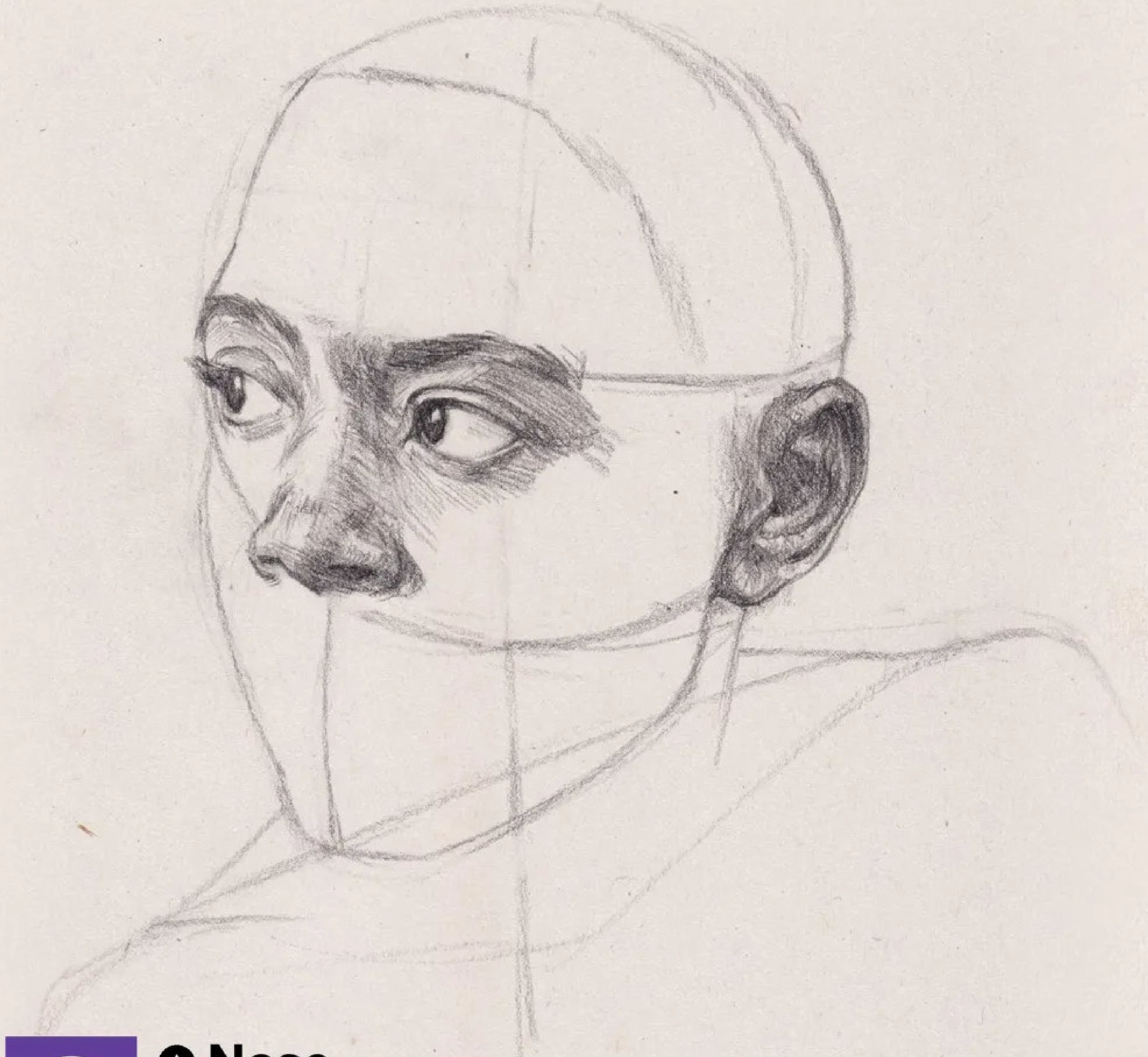


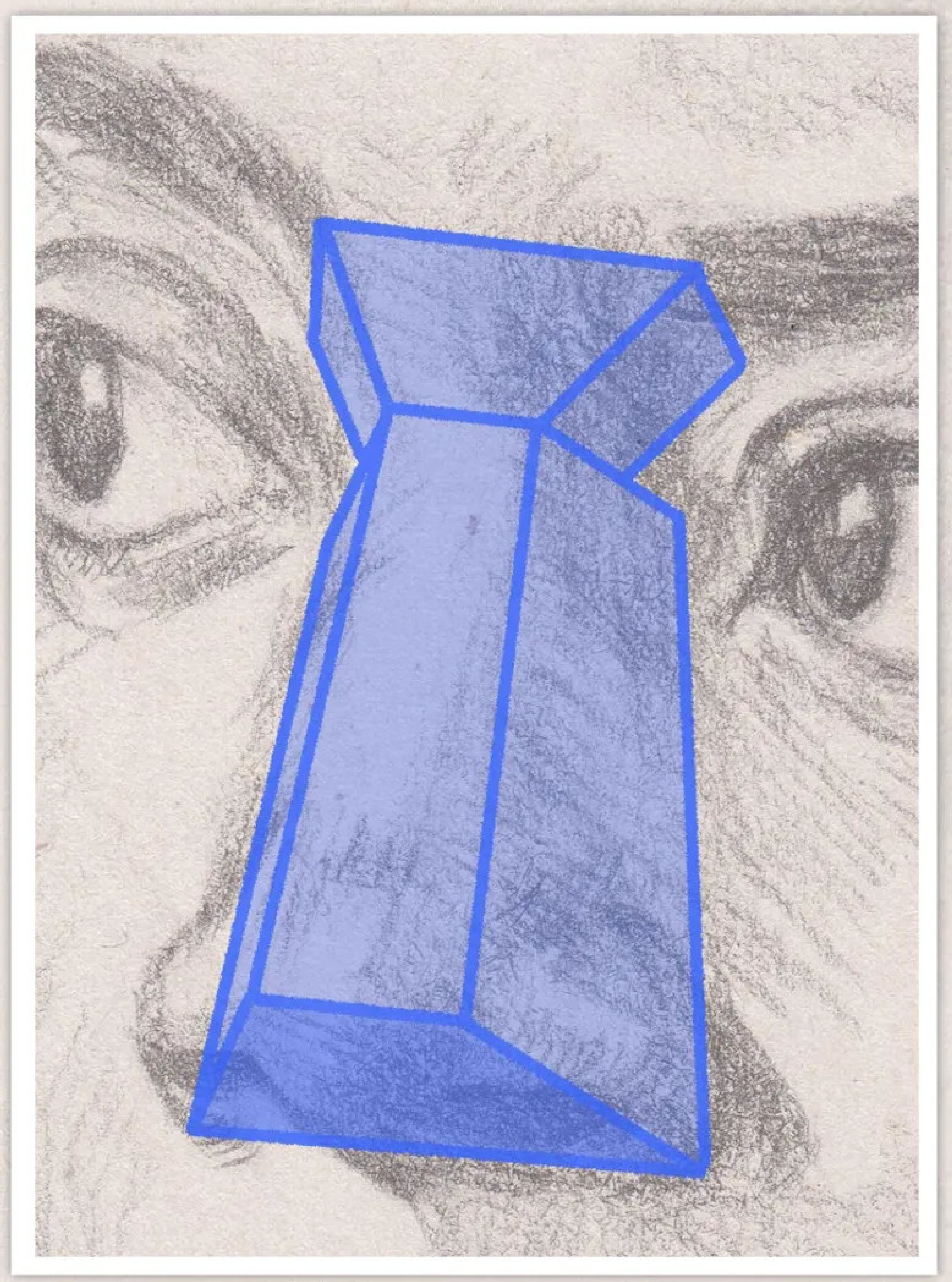


7

Ears

The ears vary a lot from person to person, but typically have the same structures. On the outside, there is the helix, creating a C-curve around the outside of the ear, then we have a Y-like shape for the antihelix, as it slots in at the top of the ear, and a small S-curve for the tragus, before we come down to the earlobe. Try to focus on drawing the dark shadow shapes created by these features – there is a lot of detail here, and this helps simplify it. Sometimes you can leave it at that.



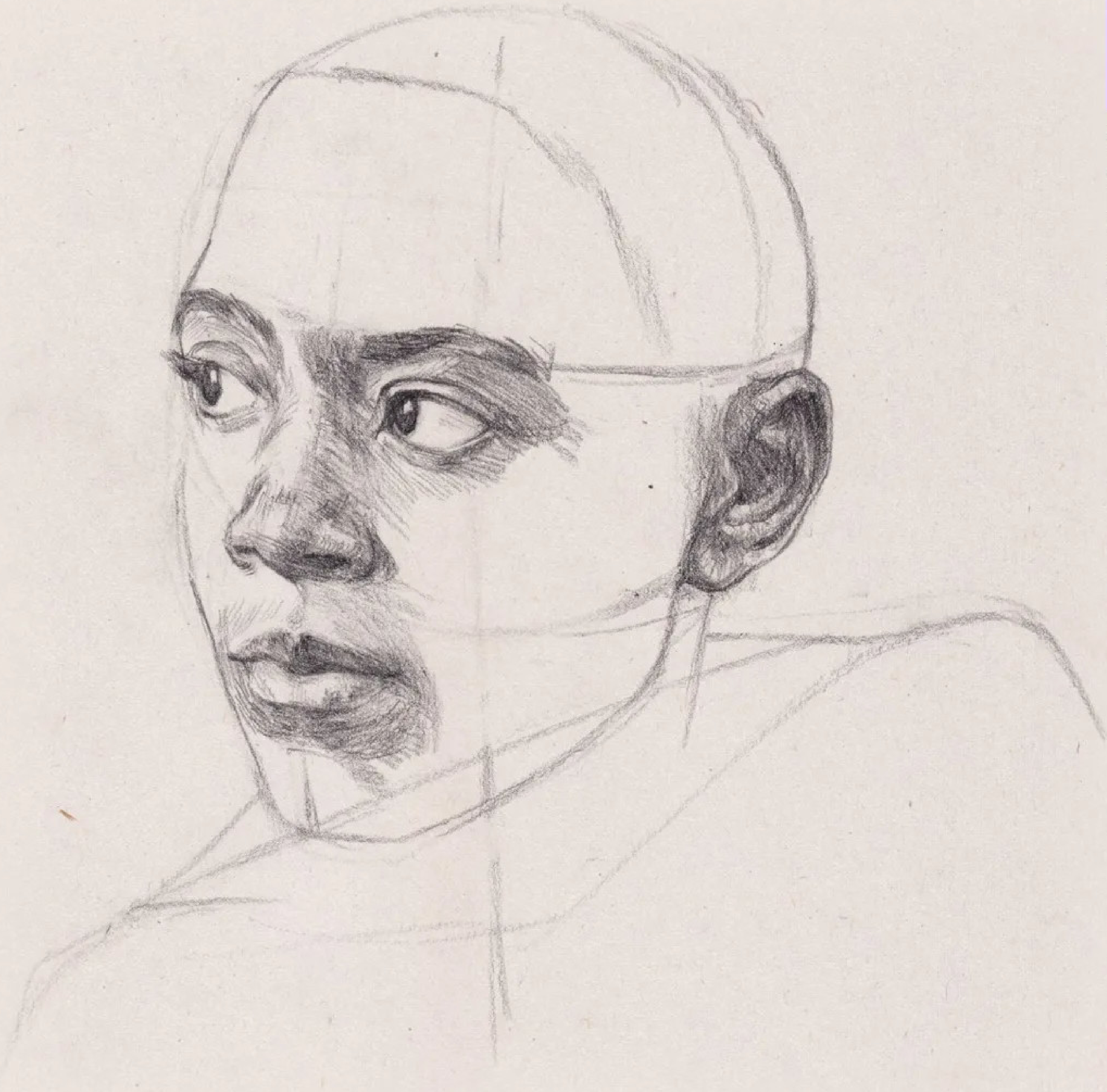


8

Nose

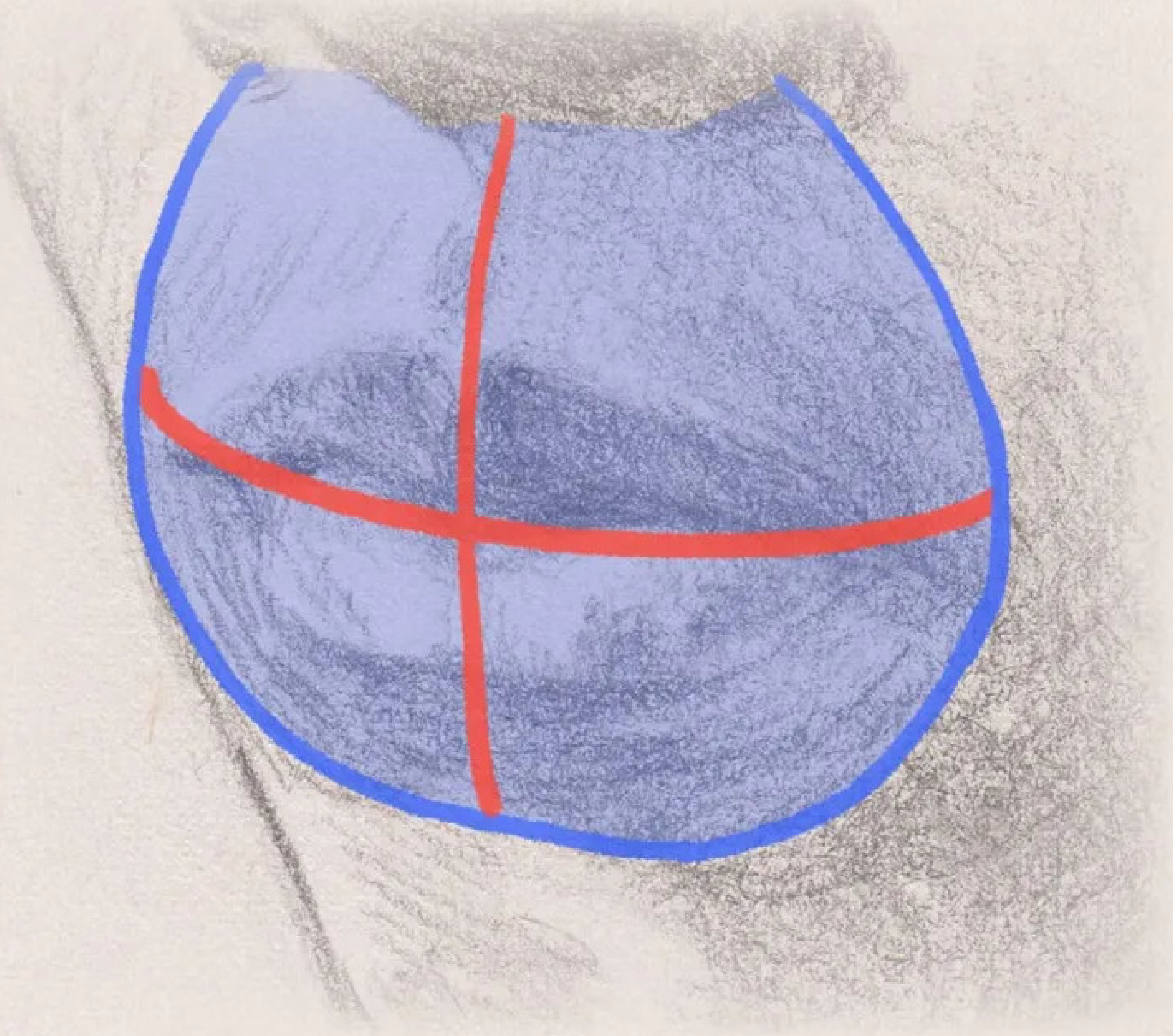
I like to simplify the nose as a sort of pinched gold bar shape that fits in just under a keystone shape placed between the eyebrows. This form accounts for the underside of the nose having its own plane, which is usually in shadow. Because the nose has no hard edges with the face, rather, it smoothly rises, be as minimal as possible with your lines as you put them in. Sometimes you can lose the nostrils in shadow, but if you can see them, keep an eye out for where the edge softens and merges with the surrounding area.

The sketch



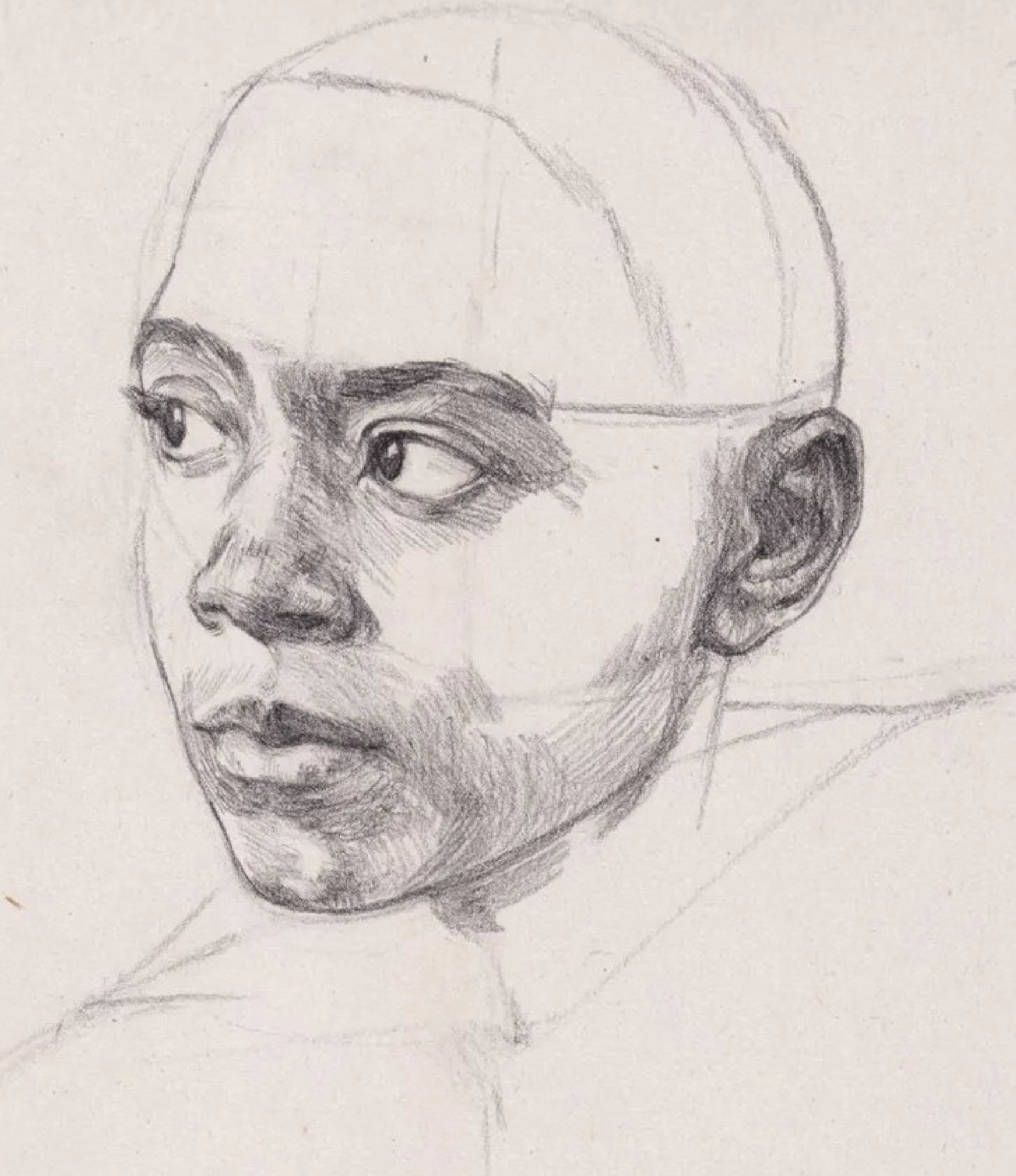
9 Mouth

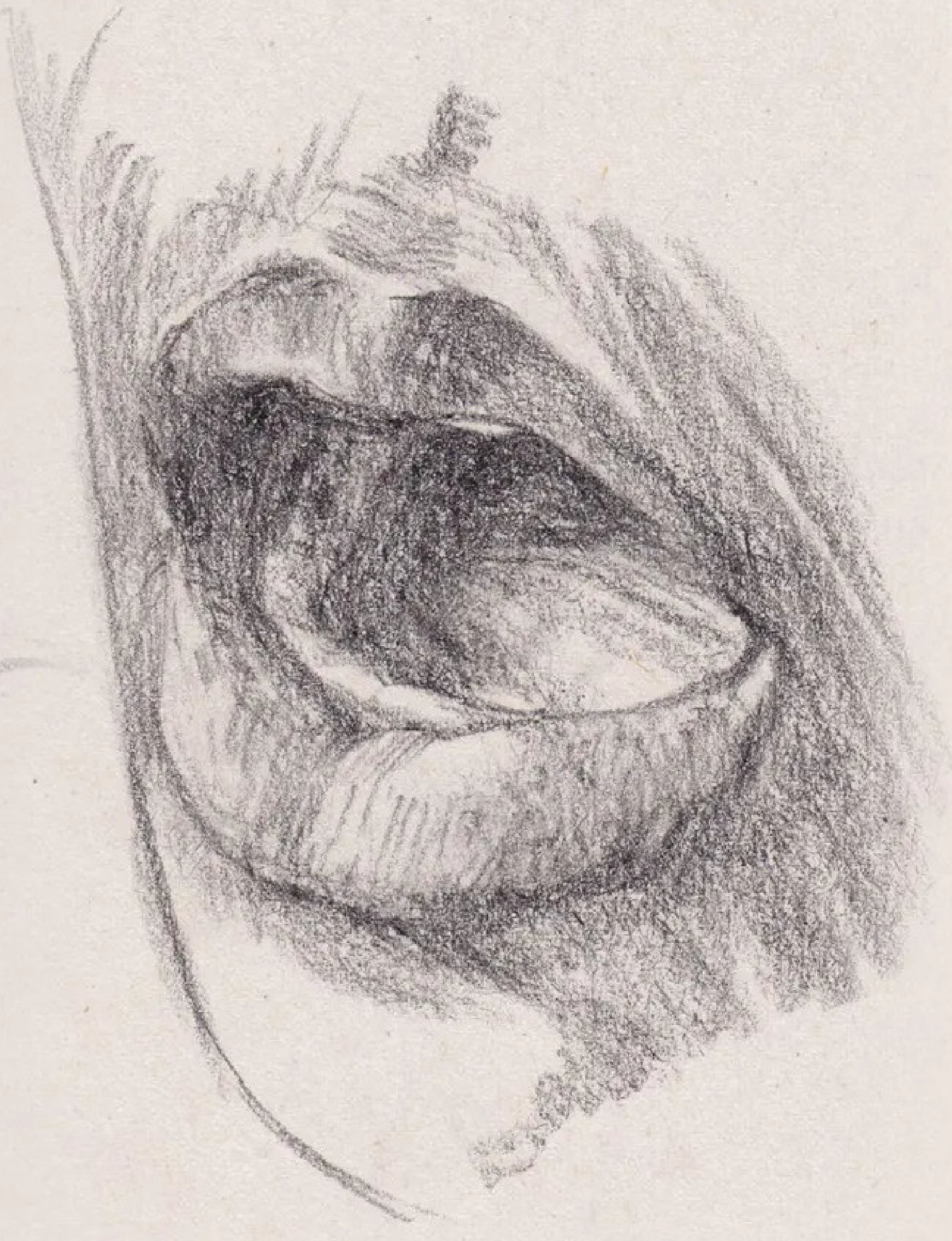
The mouth has volume to it that makes it protrude from the face, and it is mounted on the round forms of the jaws, resulting in a curvature to the lips. When drawing the mouth, try to start with the centreline, as this anchors the other forms. From here, you can place the shape of the upper and lower lip, but try to avoid outlining them – they are very soft and should transition smoothly to the surrounding skin.



10 Jaw

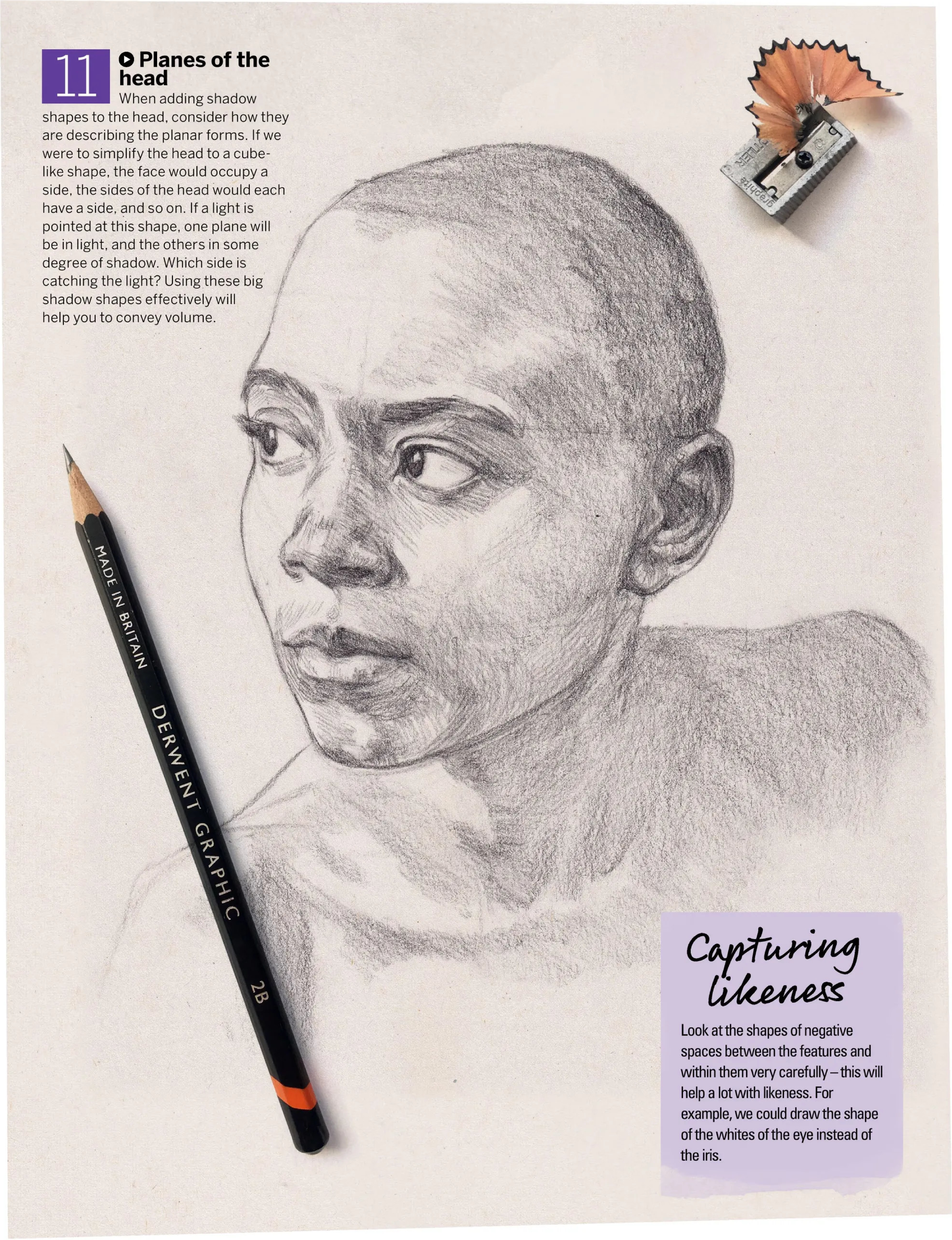
Underneath the soft forms, the jaw has a horseshoe shape as the mouth and cheeks wrap around it. This is important when we draw the teeth, as they fit to this shape as well. The jaw hinges just in front of the ear, so when the mouth is opened, it rotates around this point, bringing the chin down and back a little. A common error with open-mouth poses is that the jaw drops vertically, instead of hinging. Take care to render the jaw with soft edges, as it has a fairly rounded form.





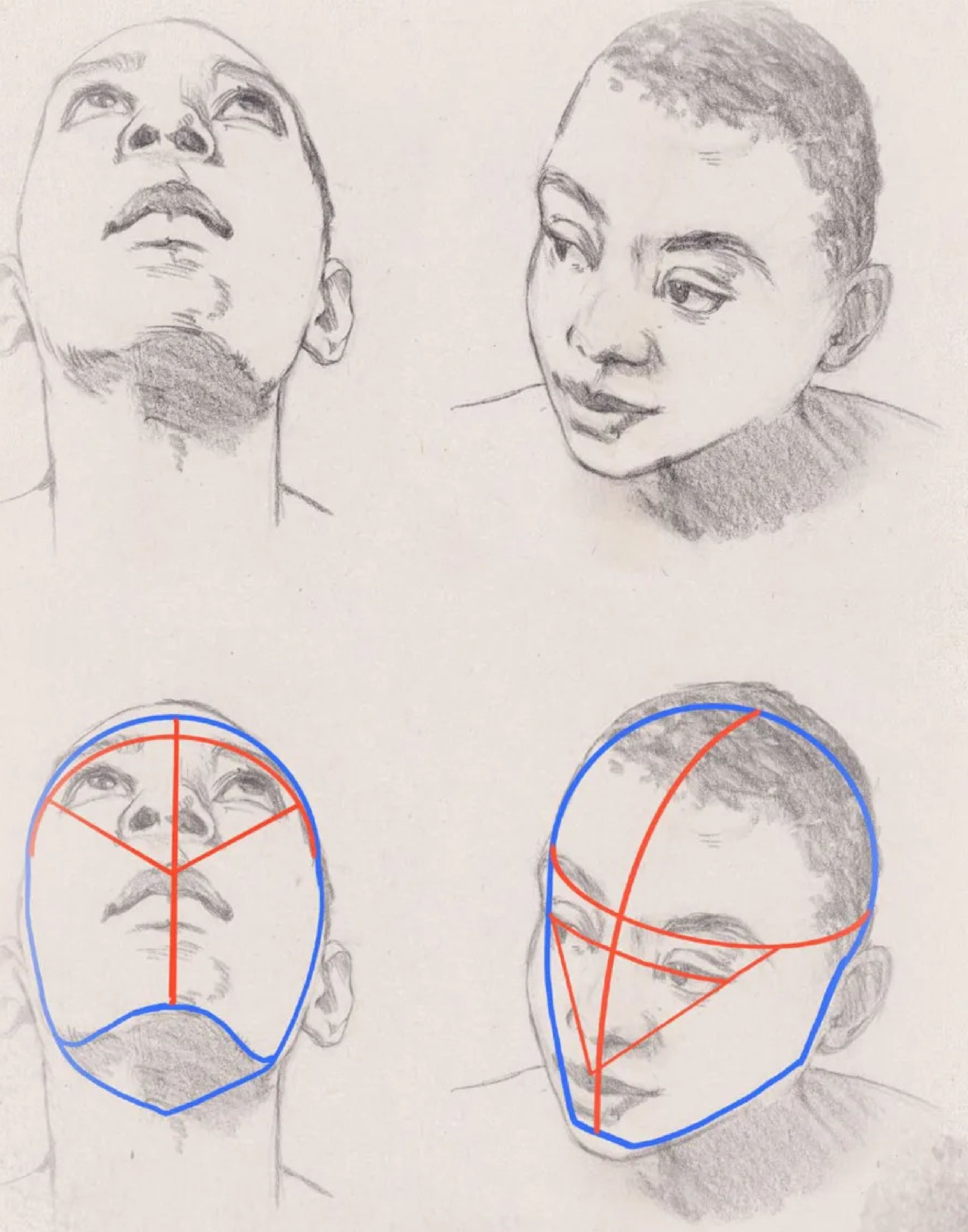
11 Planes of the head

When adding shadow shapes to the head, consider how they are describing the planar forms. If we were to simplify the head to a cube-like shape, the face would occupy a side, the sides of the head would each have a side, and so on. If a light is pointed at this shape, one plane will be in light, and the others in some degree of shadow. Which side is catching the light? Using these big shadow shapes effectively will help you to convey volume.



Capturing likeness

Look at the shapes of negative spaces between the features and within them very carefully – this will help a lot with likeness. For example, we could draw the shape of the whites of the eye instead of the iris.



12 Foreshortened angles

These are one of the most challenging aspects of drawing the face. Familiar features become distorted, and the proportions we rely on become inconsistent. Three-dimensional structure is key to working out these tough angles. By using ball forms with lines that wrap around them, we can account for the curvature of the skull when placing the features. I also find sketching an upside-down triangle that fits to the eyebrows, passes the edge of the nostrils and ends at the philtrum useful for containing the features.

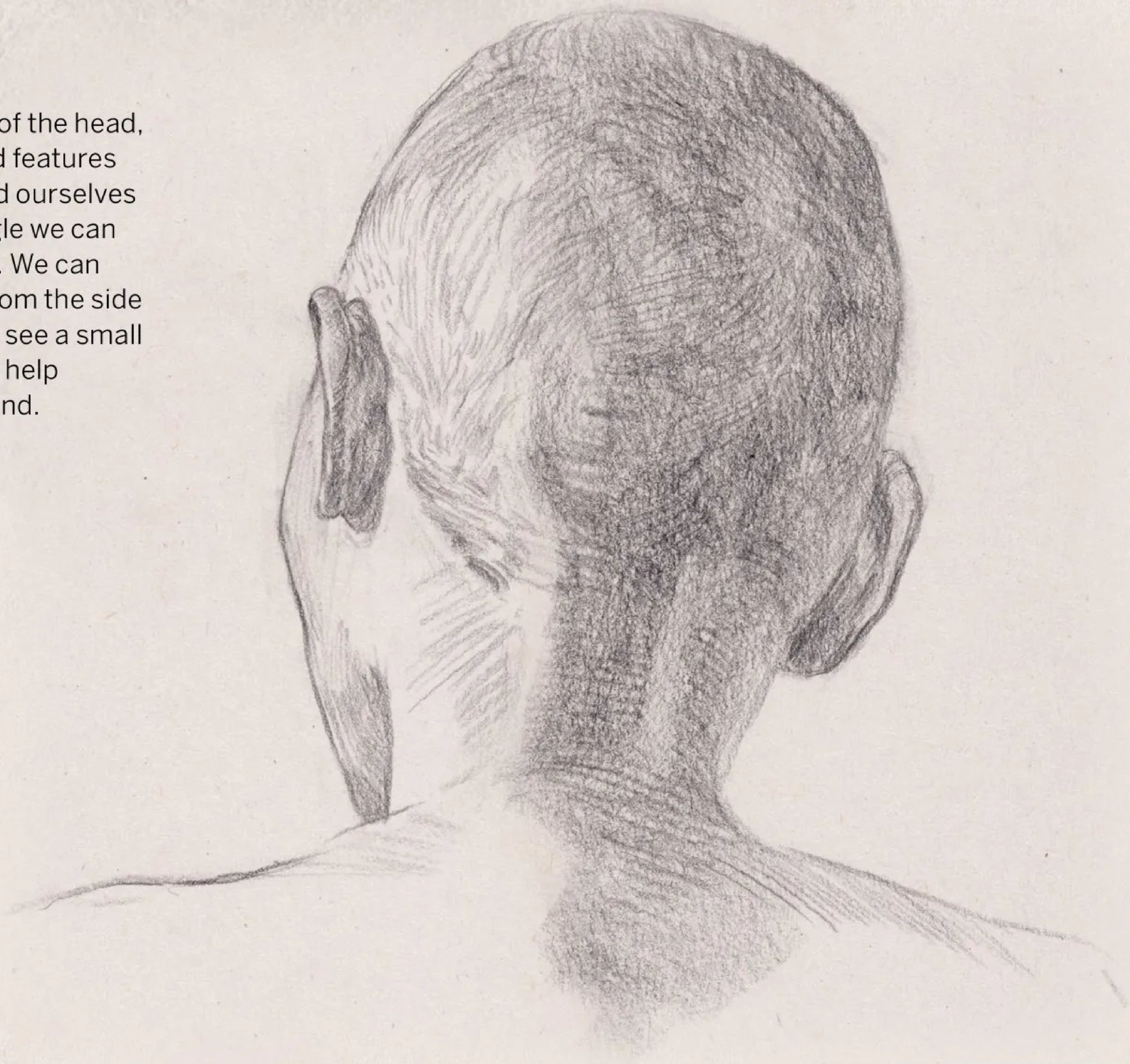
> "Three-dimensional structure is key to working out these tough angles"

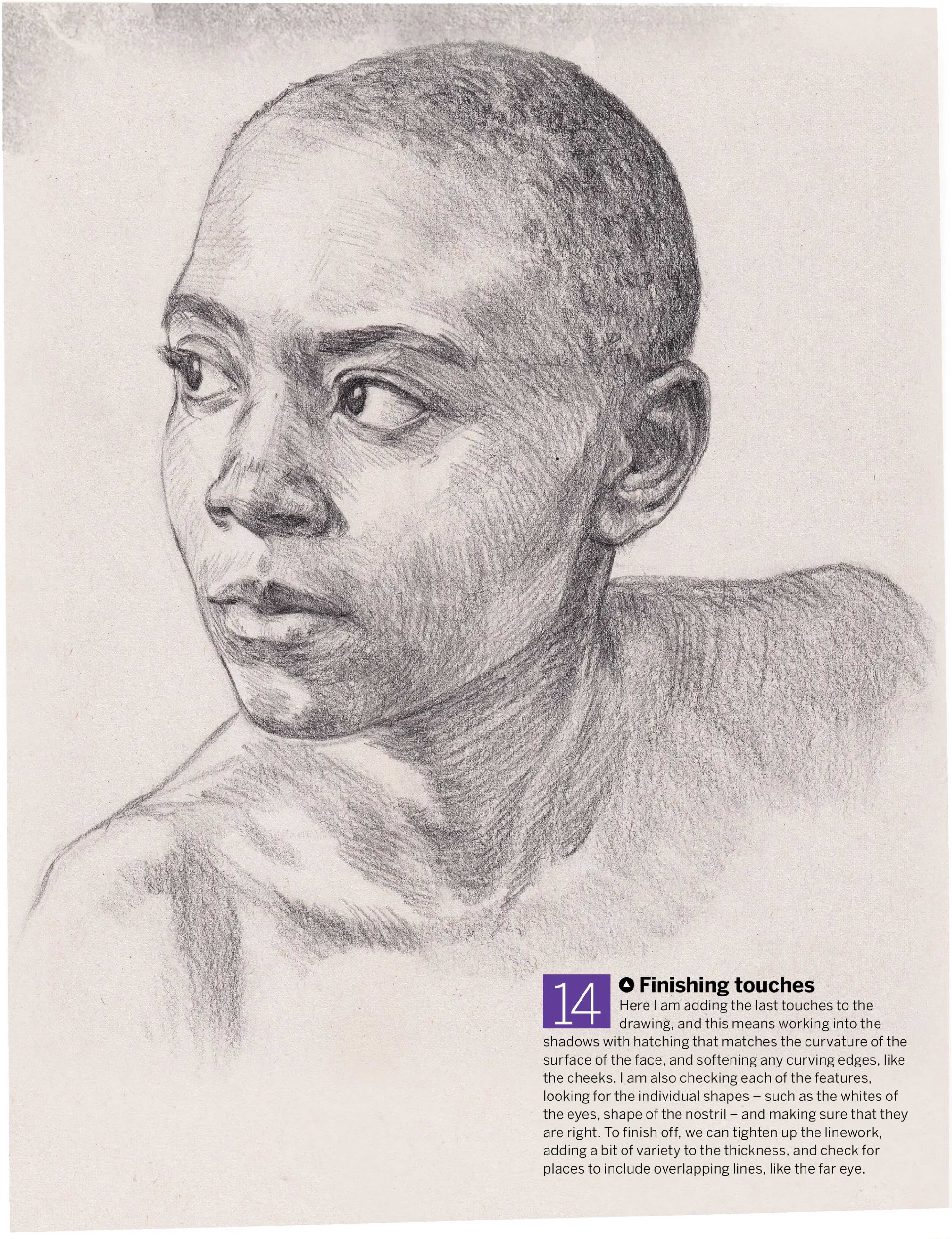
13 Back of the head

When we encounter the back of the head, sometimes it is difficult to find features to draw. First, this is a good time to remind ourselves of the large volumes there, and at this angle we can see the roundness of the back of the skull. We can clearly see how the the ears angle away from the side of the head here. Behind the neck, we can see a small section of jaw; the amount either side can help indicate slight turns of the head from behind.

Proportion with the body

Typically a figure is seven and a half heads tall, give or take. Always check this, for we are all a bit different. The head is good for measuring because it is a consistent, rigid structure.





14 Finishing touches

Here I am adding the last touches to the drawing, and this means working into the shadows with hatching that matches the curvature of the surface of the face, and softening any curving edges, like the cheeks. I am also checking each of the features, looking for the individual shapes – such as the whites of the eyes, shape of the nostril – and making sure that they are right. To finish off, we can tighten up the linework, adding a bit of variety to the thickness, and check for places to include overlapping lines, like the far eye.

15 tips on drawing realistic heads

Portraiture is **Oliver Sin's** favourite form of artistic expression. Here, he reveals the techniques he uses to create his stunning charcoal artworks

About OLIVER
US

After graduating in 1996 from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, Oliver worked as a game concept artist at LucasArts. He has since returned to his old school to be a professor of art and 2D animation.
instagram.com/oliversin

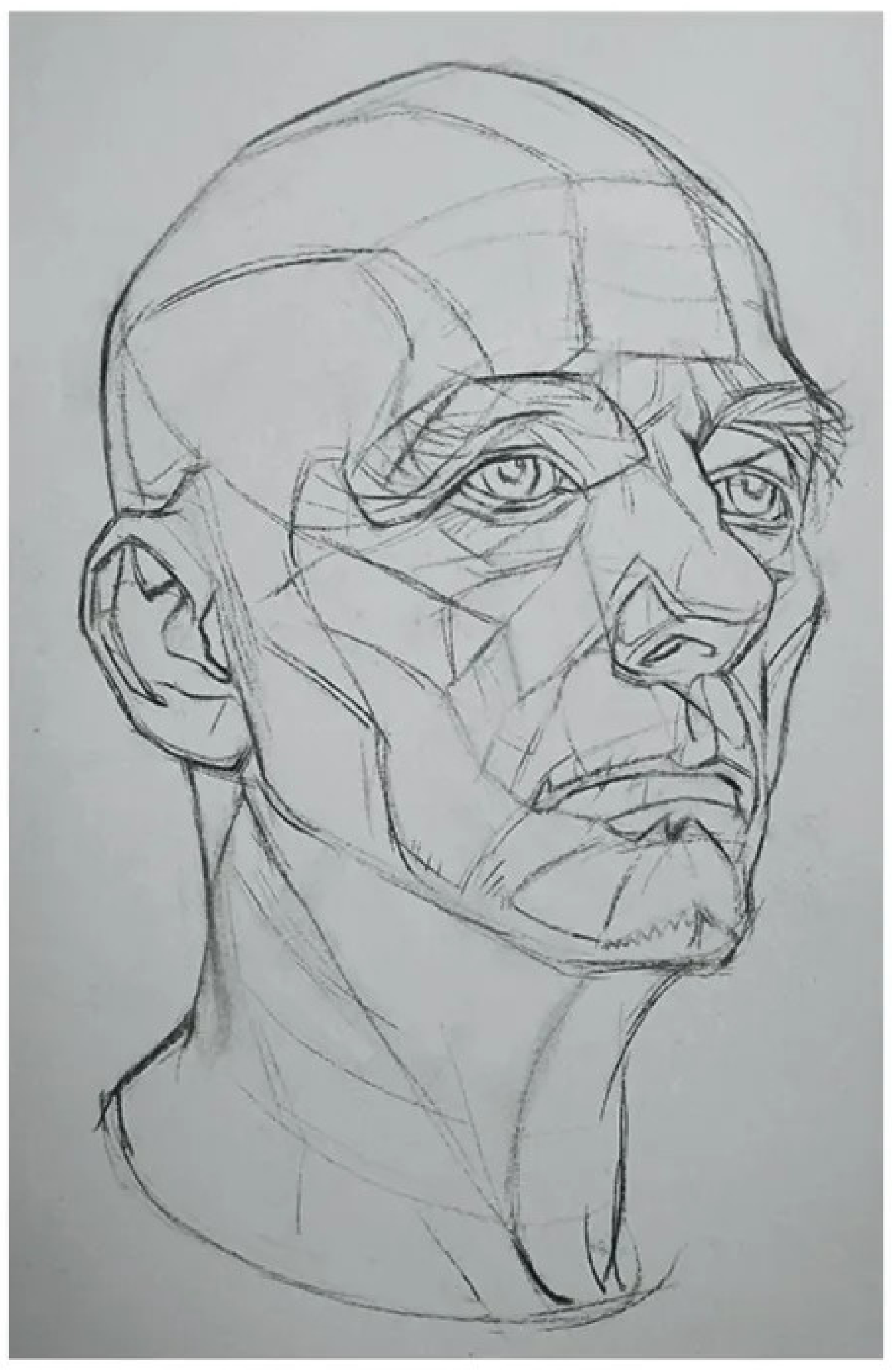
This workshop will take you through all aspects of my drawing method, which I've developed over the years and now pass on to my students as art professor at San Francisco's Academy of Art University. Over the next few pages I'll reveal my key composition techniques, which range from establishing a point of view to applying key illustration principles for creating an accurate and expressive likeness of the human head.

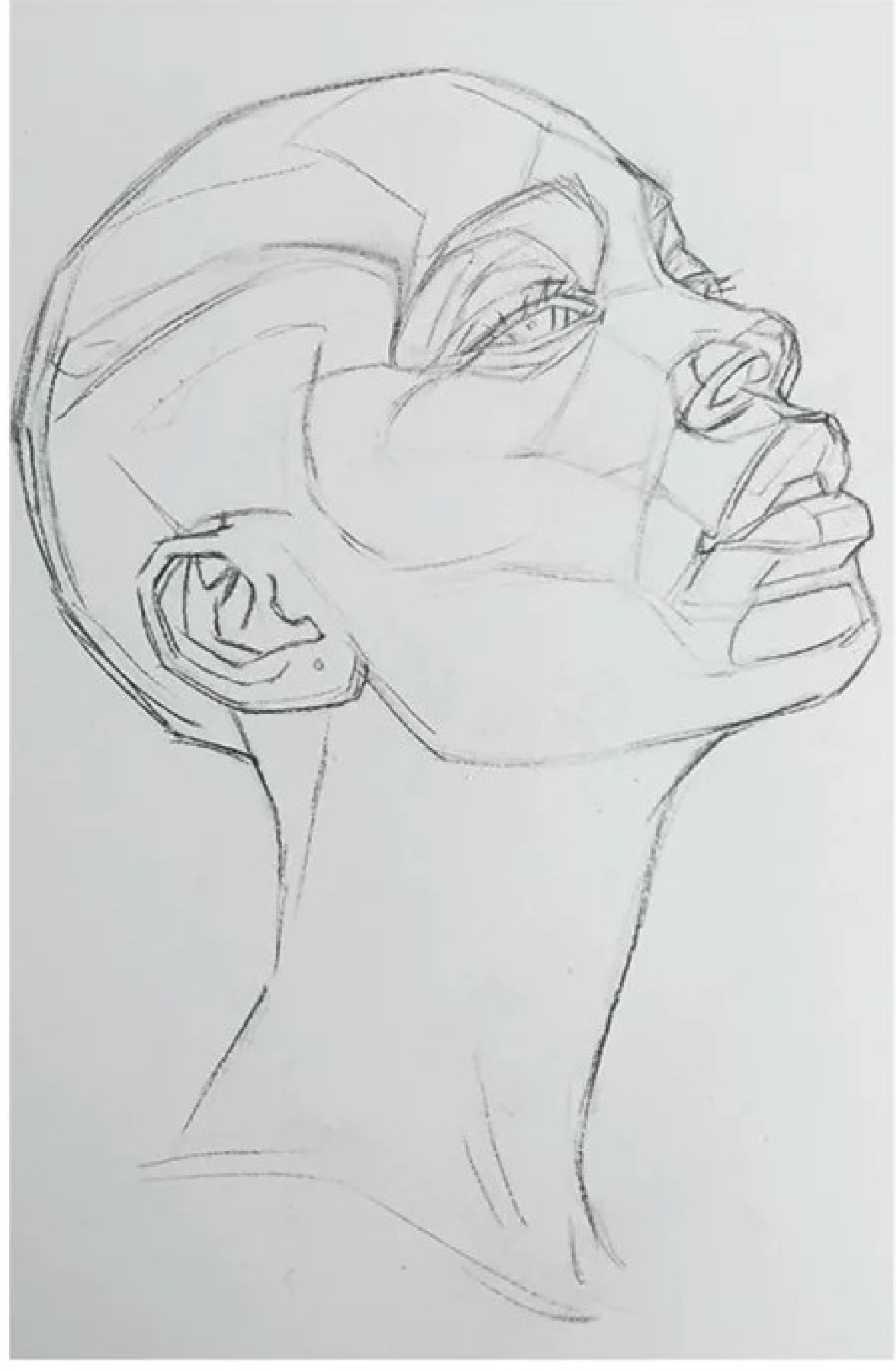
You'll also learn how to apply what I consider to be the essentials of human facial anatomy, and explore how the concepts of value, shapes and plane changes affect a portrait's underlying structure. Elsewhere in this article I'll reveal my techniques for creating depth and dimension, and investigate how contrasting shapes are used to enhance depth in an illustration.

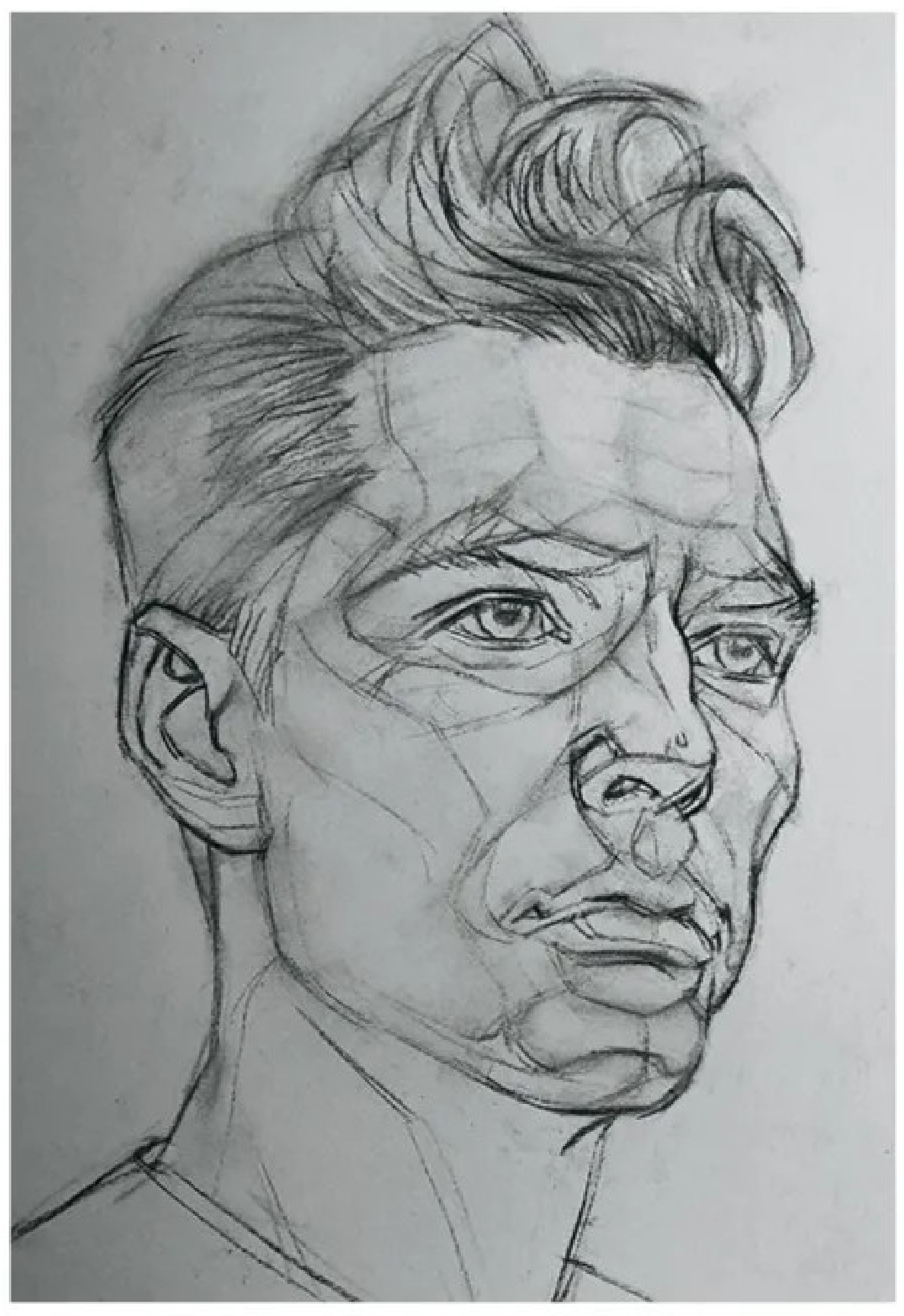
If your figure drawings are looking a little flat, then fear not – I'll also be covering how to create the illusion of three dimensions when drawing on a flat surface. I'll examine how edges – contours as well as changes in value – are used to convey three-dimensional form. And it's important to remember that not all portraits have to work in isolation. In this article I'll also be demonstrating how expressive hands, facial hair and the right choice of background can all enhance the finished piece, and make for a more pleasing viewing experience. So grab that charcoal stick and let's start drawing!

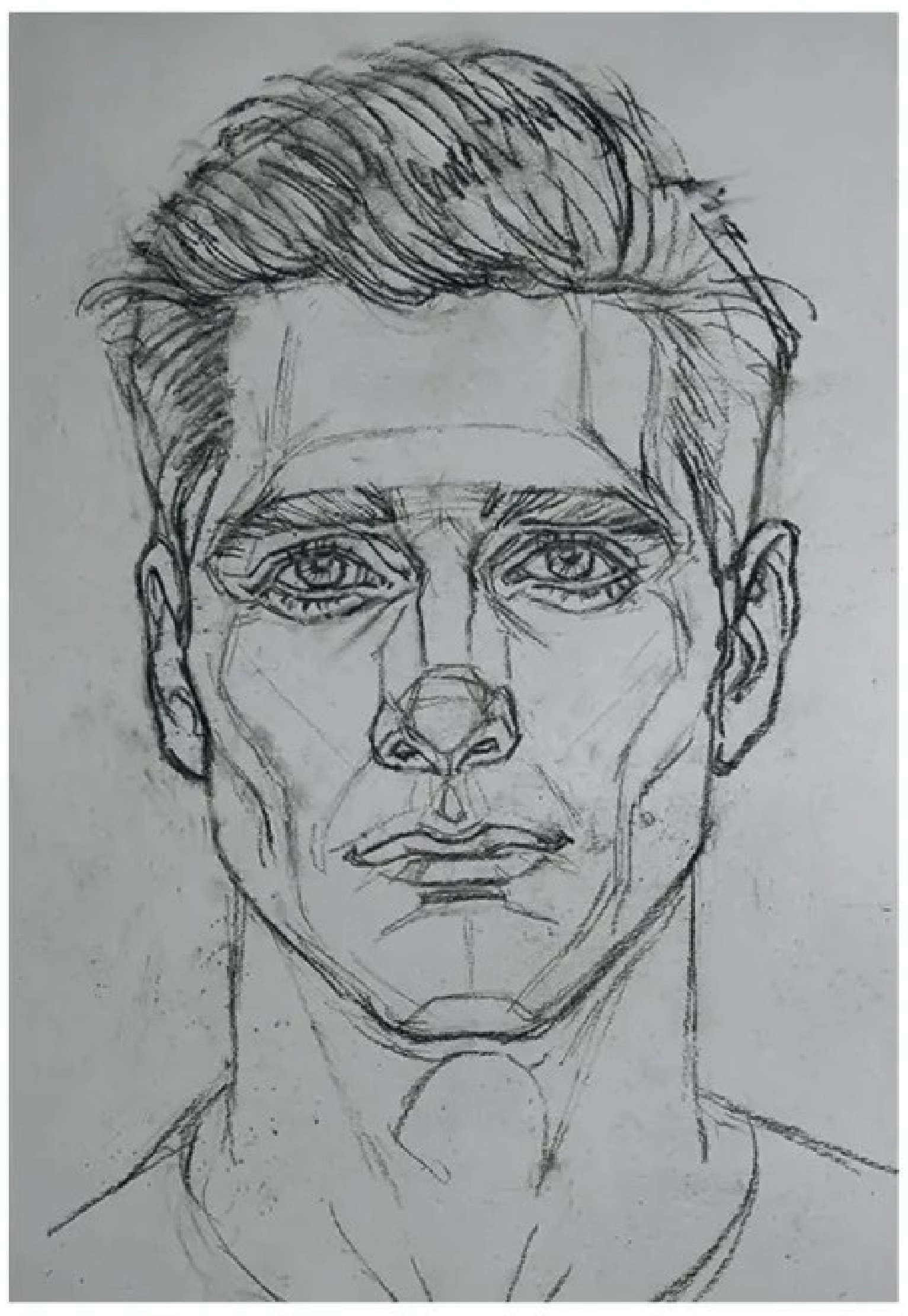
1 ▼ Expressive use of line

I drew these portraits with expressive lines by using only the tip of the vine charcoal, without blending with the flat side. I use lines to depict the form of the head. It's been said that a line is a moving dot, or a point in motion. A line can guide a viewer's eye by defining edges and outlining shapes. Lines used to outline a shape are called contour or contour lines. The five types of lines are vertical lines, horizontal lines, diagonal lines, zig-zag lines and curved lines.







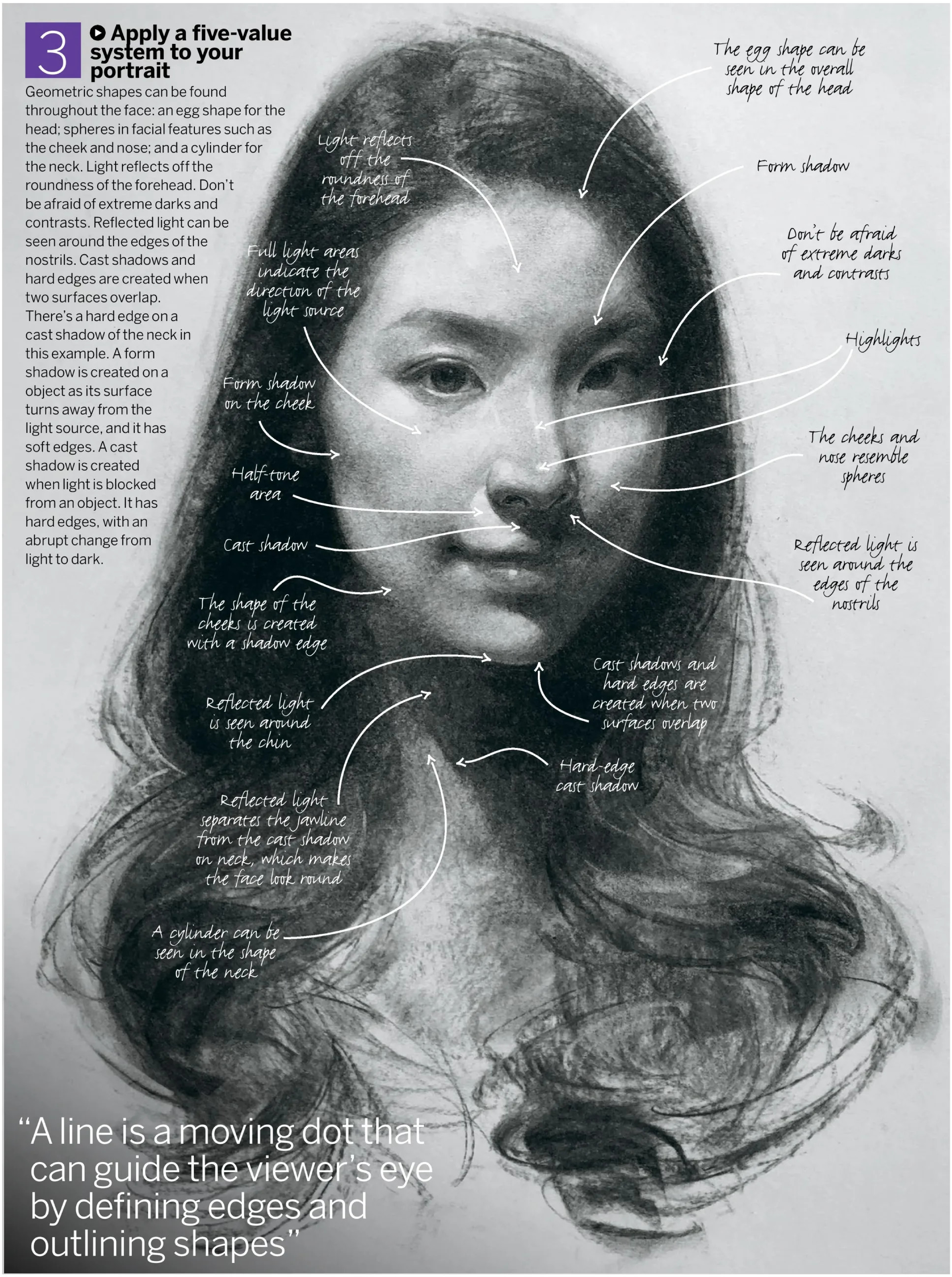


2 ▲ Consider your shapes

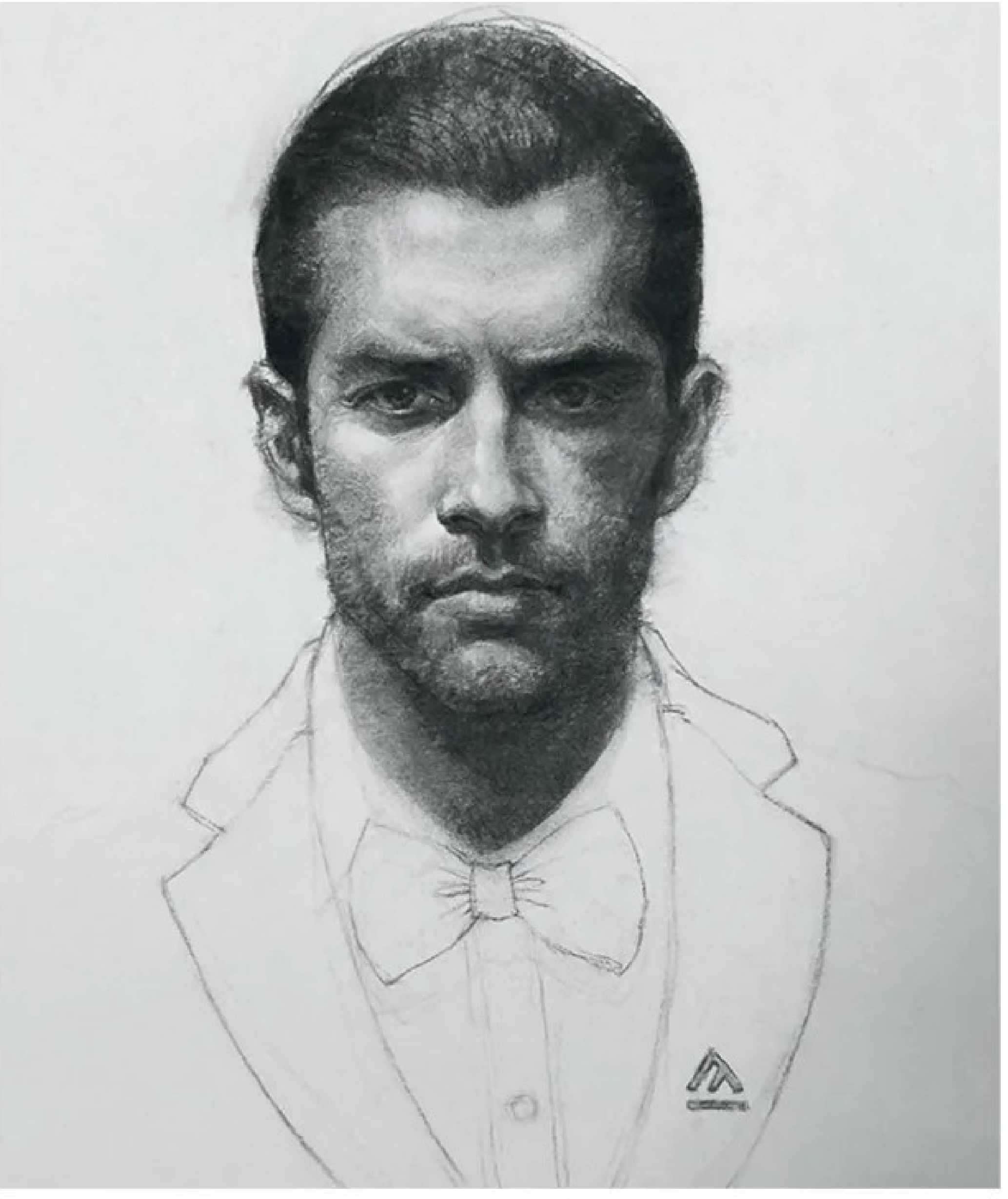
A shape is a closed contour, created when a line is enclosed, or when the ends of a line meet. All shapes are two-dimensional – they have both length and width. There are two types of shapes: geometric and organic. Geometric shapes include circles, triangles and squares. Organic shapes are those irregular, uneven shapes that seem to follow no rules; these expressive shapes are typically not man-made. I use mostly geometric shapes to depict a contour lines head drawings.

3 Apply a five-value system to your portrait

Geometric shapes can be found throughout the face: an egg shape for the head; spheres in facial features such as the cheek and nose; and a cylinder for the neck. Light reflects off the roundness of the forehead. Don't be afraid of extreme darks and contrasts. Reflected light can be seen around the edges of the nostrils. Cast shadows and hard edges are created when two surfaces overlap. There's a hard edge on a cast shadow of the neck in this example. A form shadow is created on a object as its surface turns away from the light source, and it has soft edges. A cast shadow is created when light is blocked from an object. It has hard edges, with an abrupt change from light to dark.


The egg shape can be seen in the overall shape of the head
Light reflects off the roundness of the forehead
Form shadow
Don't be afraid of extreme darks and contrasts
Full light areas indicate the direction of the light source
Highlights
Form shadow on the cheek
The cheeks and nose resemble spheres
Half-tone area
Cast shadow
Reflected light is seen around the edges of the nostrils
The shape of the cheeks is created with a shadow edge
Cast shadows and hard edges are created when two surfaces overlap
Reflected light is seen around the chin
Hard-edge cast shadow
Reflected light separates the jawline from the cast shadow on neck, which makes the face look round
A cylinder can be seen in the shape of the neck

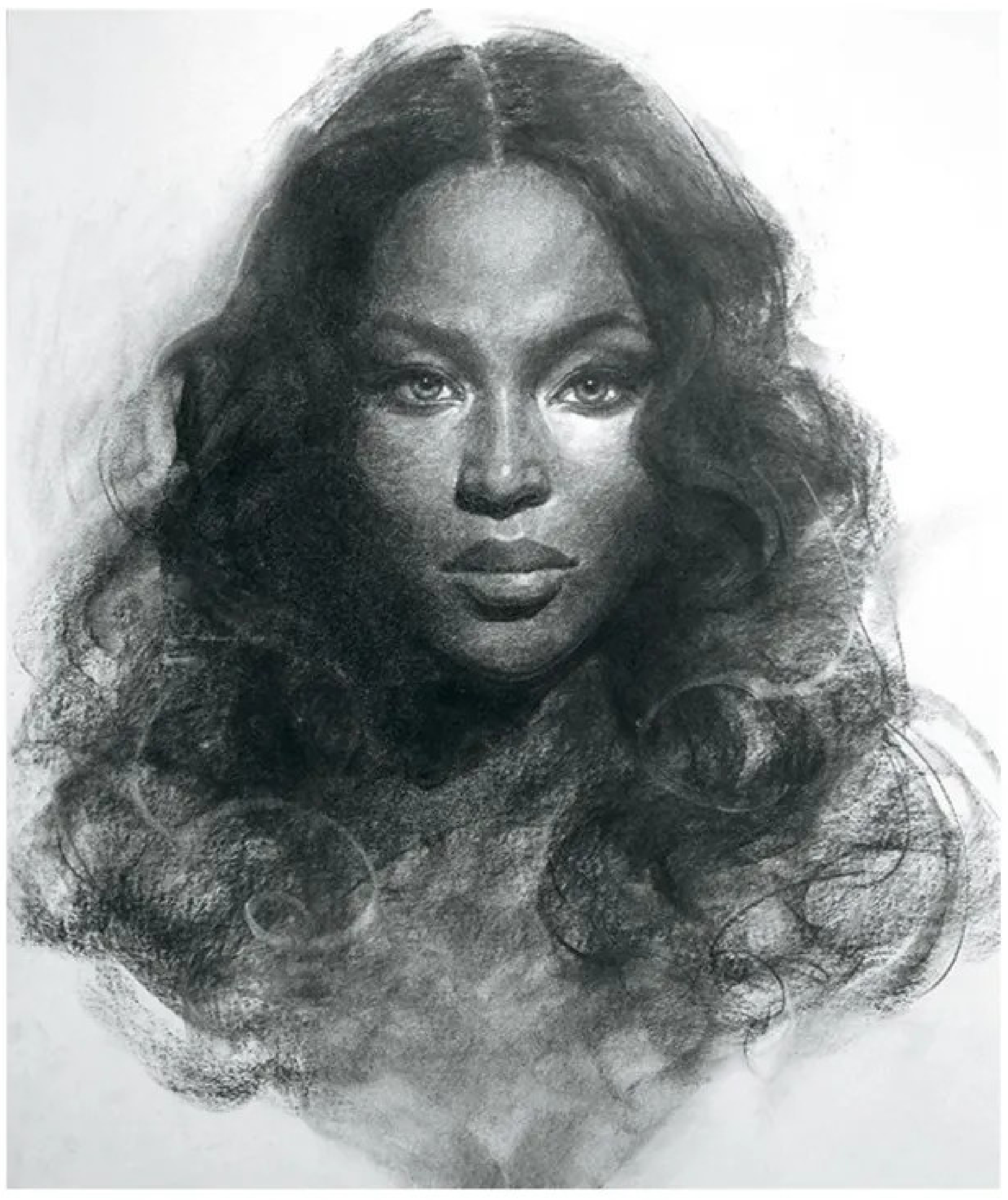
> "A line is a moving dot that can guide the viewer's eye by defining edges and outlining shapes"



4

Understand forms

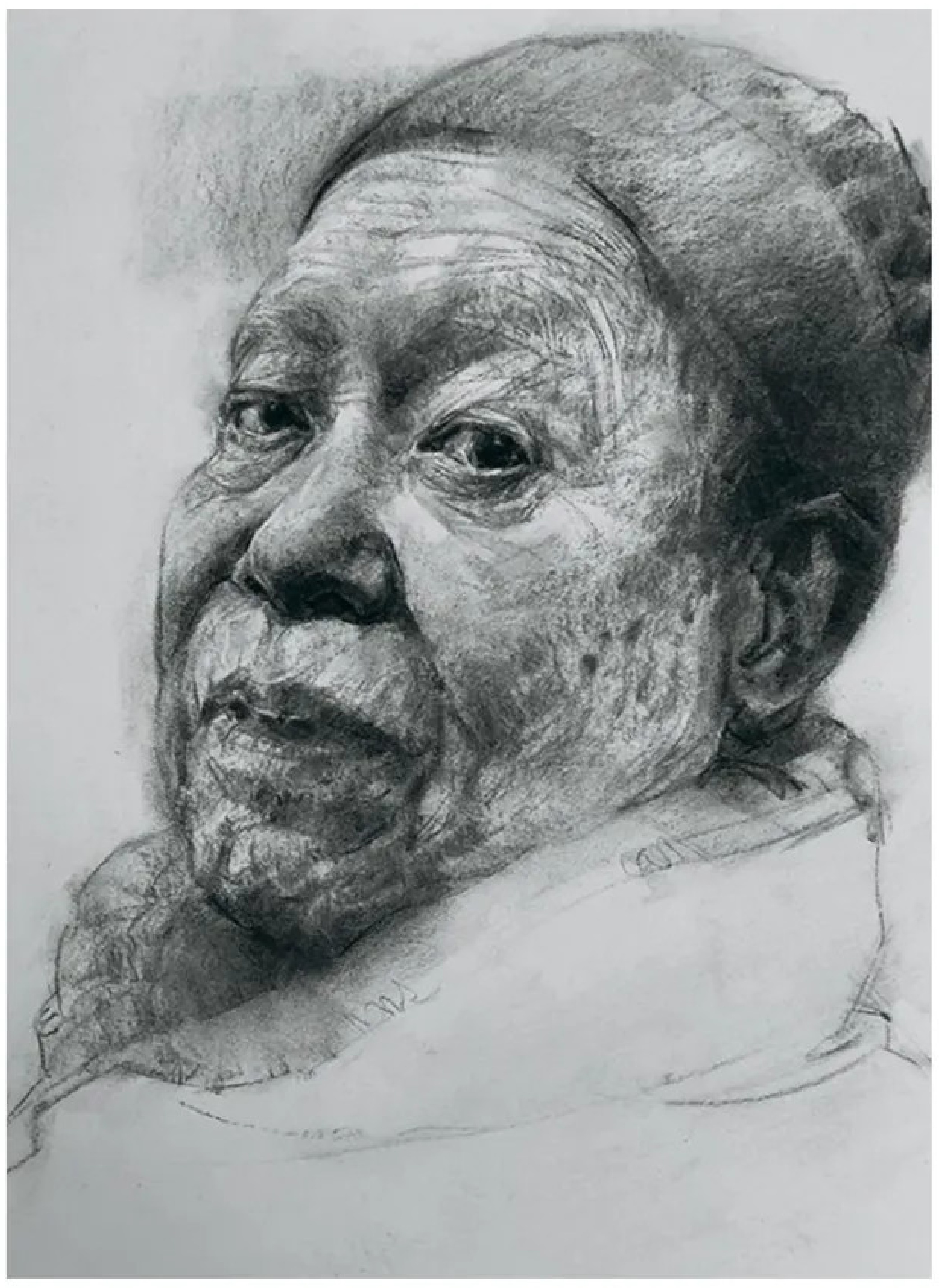
Form and shape are related. I think of forms as three-dimensional shapes. In art, the term form refers to an object that has length, width and height. I encourage you to develop your understanding of form, and how to create the illusion of form in head drawings, by studying the effect of light on objects. I prefer top lighting, which highlights the top-facing planes and casts extreme shadows. It's best to use a single light source to light the head for portraiture.

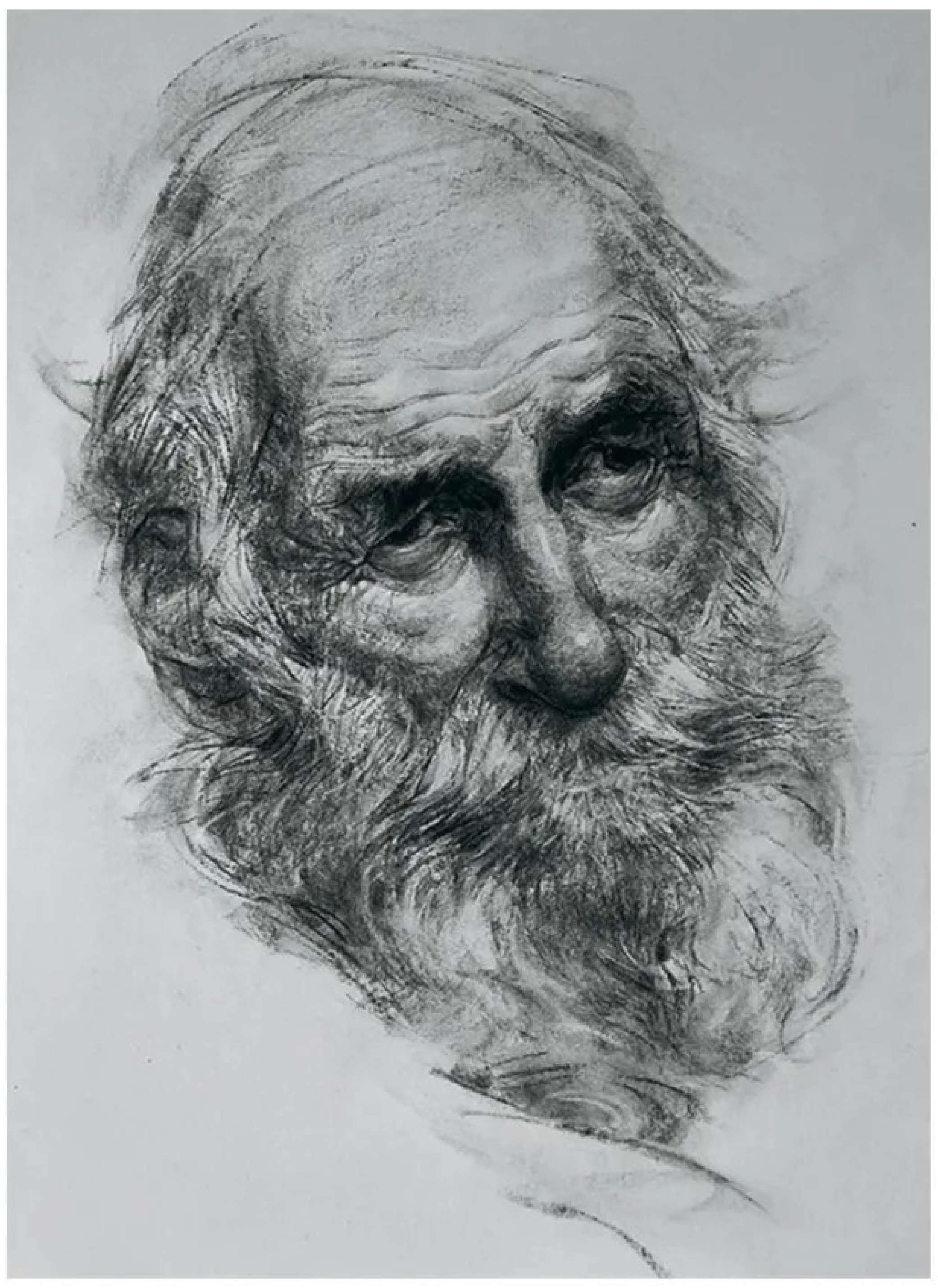


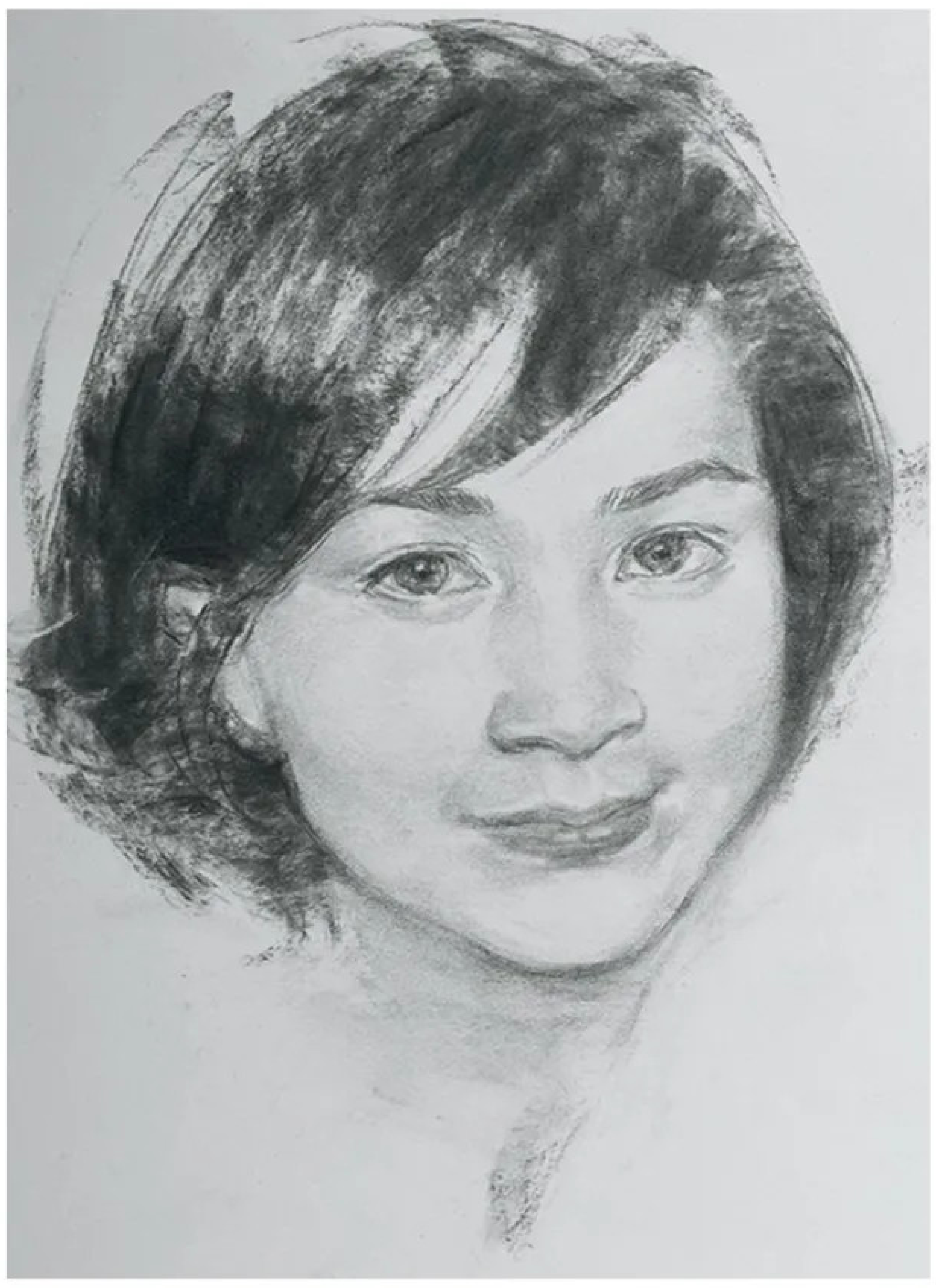
5

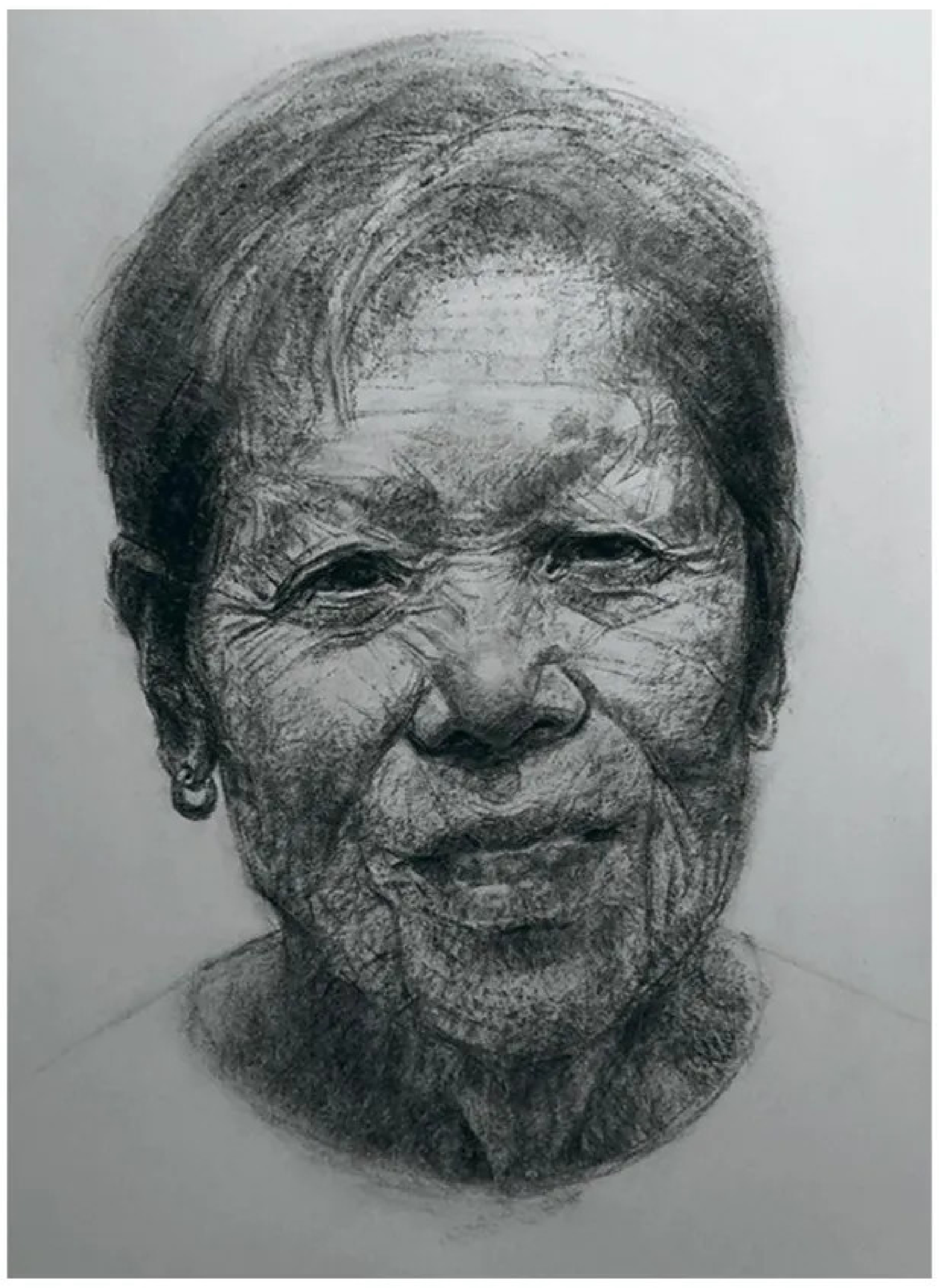
The power of values

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a tone. Value is crucial in a drawing because light and dark values describe the form of an object. All objects have a highlight, light, mid-tone, core shadow and reflected light, and I often apply this five-value system to my portrait drawings. Value is the key to the illusion of light, and a realistic drawing depends on a range of values. When drawing portraits, light and shadow translate from simple planes and shapes into detailed variations of value and line.





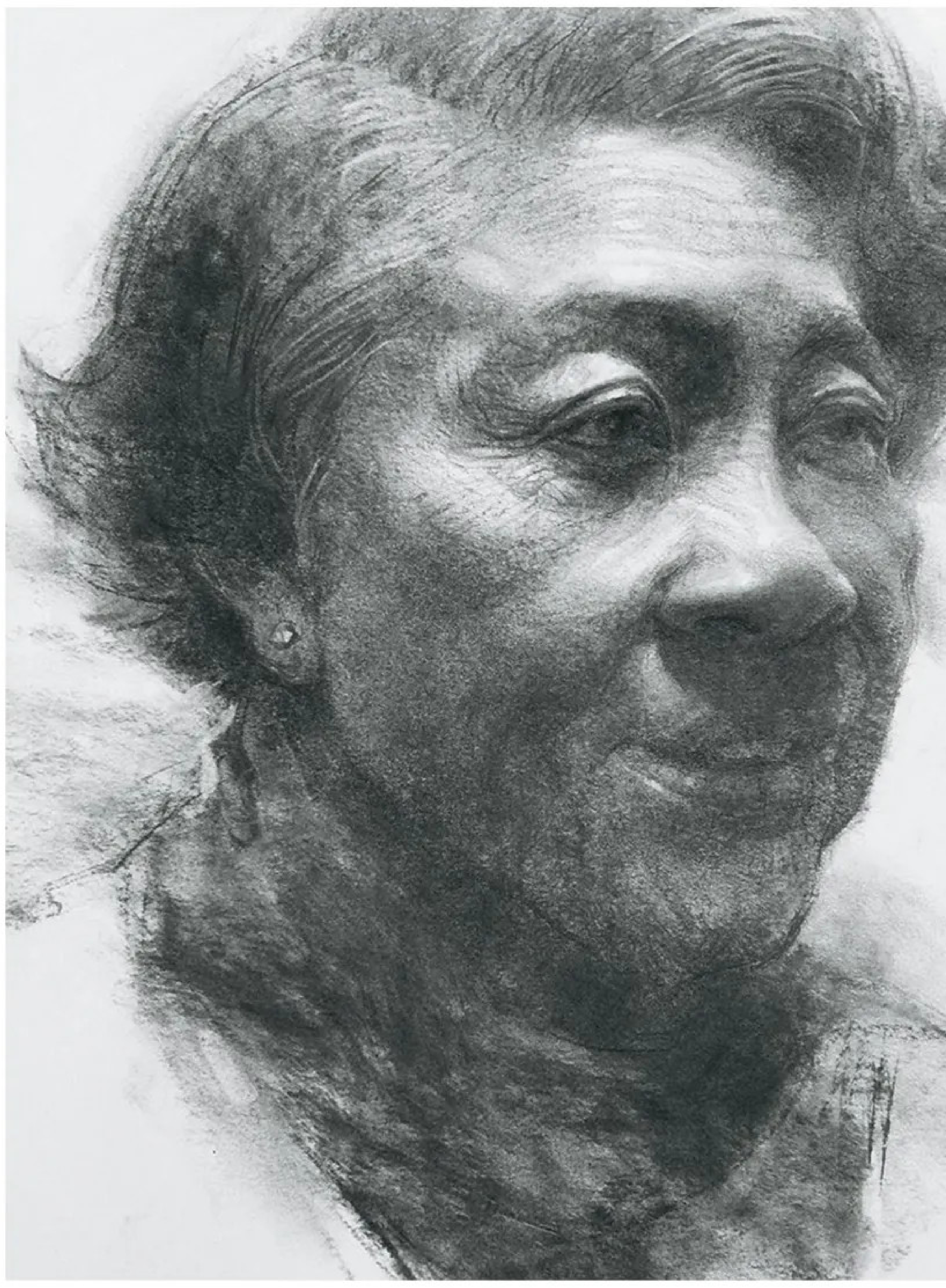




6

Combining line and value

Line and value work together to create a likeness of the model. Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a colour or tone. Drawing areas of value alone ensures an artist becomes more aware of masses, forms and light. Drawing lines encourages the artist to study, judge and plan before drawing. The knowledge gained from line-drawing helps the artist make decisions about the edges of each area of tone as they develop the values. When drawing portraits, light and shadow translate from simple planes and shapes into detailed variations of value and line.



> "A good drawing features something that comes from within the artist"

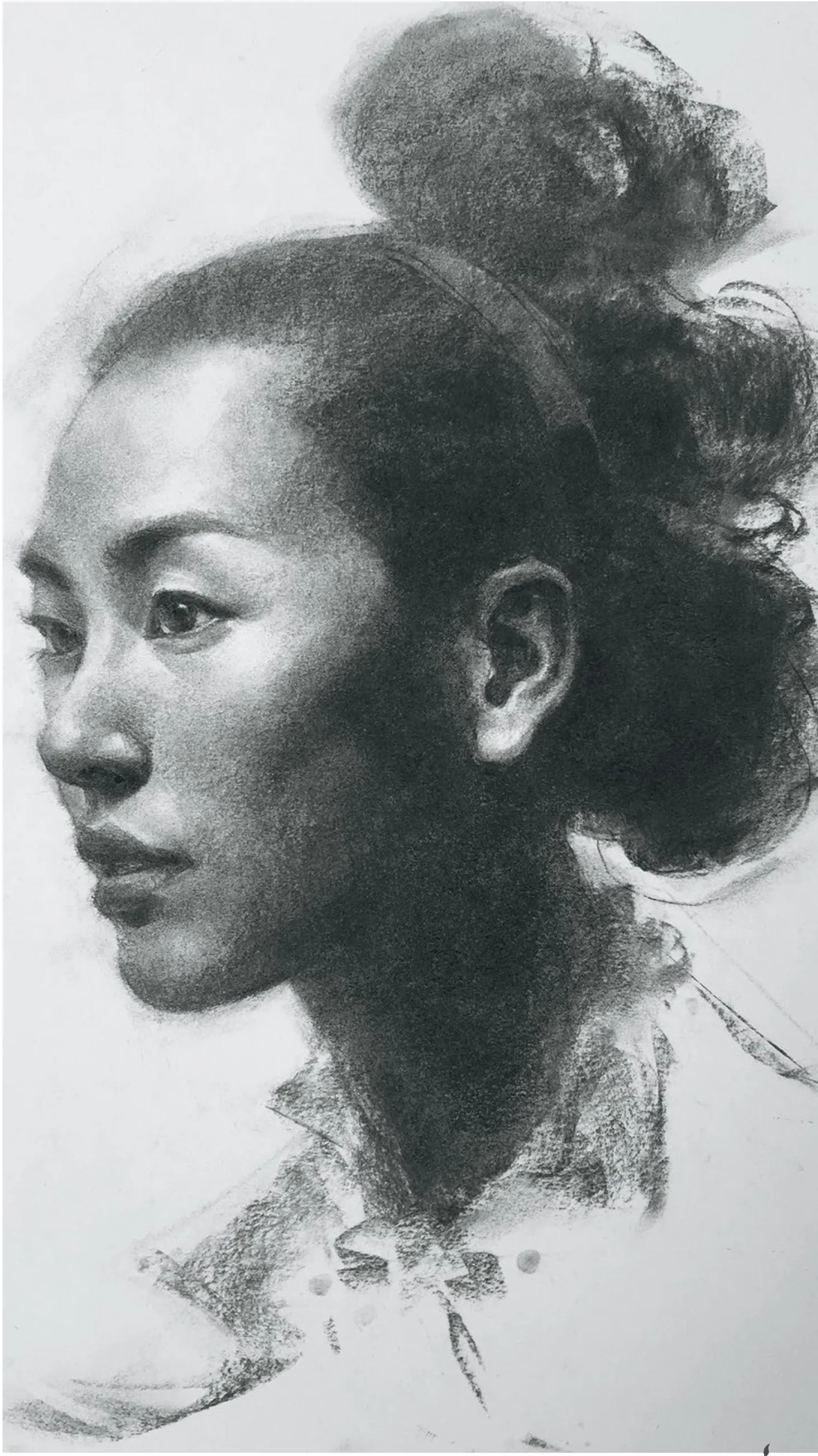
7 ▶ Foreshortening when in three-quarter view

When the head is viewed at three-quarter angle, the perspective of the facial features are skewed. Foreshortening causes the closest parts of an object to appear larger than those farther away. Study proportion variation and measure the distance between features. Three-quarter view places the emphasis on the closest eye as the focal point. The eyes and eyebrows reveal the mood of your subject – they can show emotion and personality. The near side of the face is wider than the far side because of foreshortened perspective. The cheekbone is more defined on the far side of the face, with a harder contour line.

8 ◀ Contrasting values

Value contrast is the best way to create the illusion of depth. Areas with a lot of contrast will come forward; areas with little contrast will recede. In this piece, as the scarf wraps around the neck I pushed it back visually by lowering the contrast, using similar values within it and drawing a thin line to suggest an edge. It becomes less visible as it recedes, instead of outlining its shape which would give it its own separate value.

I applied the same approach at the crown of the head by gradually lightening the value of the hair so that it recedes into the background. Reducing value contrast at the perimeters of the face draws the eye to its centre, where I used high contrast between the left eye socket and the forehead.



9 How to draw an expressive portrait

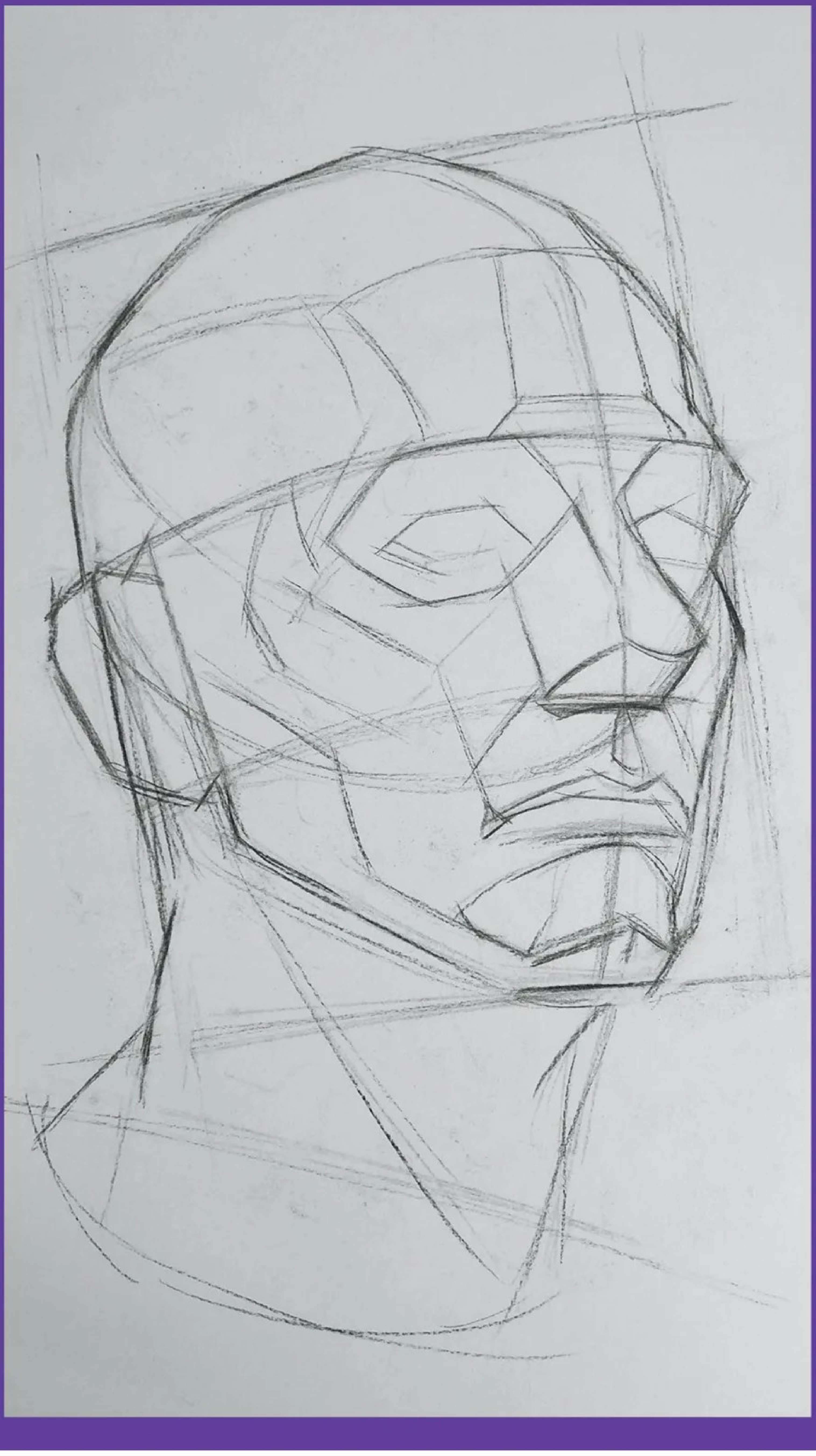
Oliver develops an expressive portrait from start to finish in vine charcoal

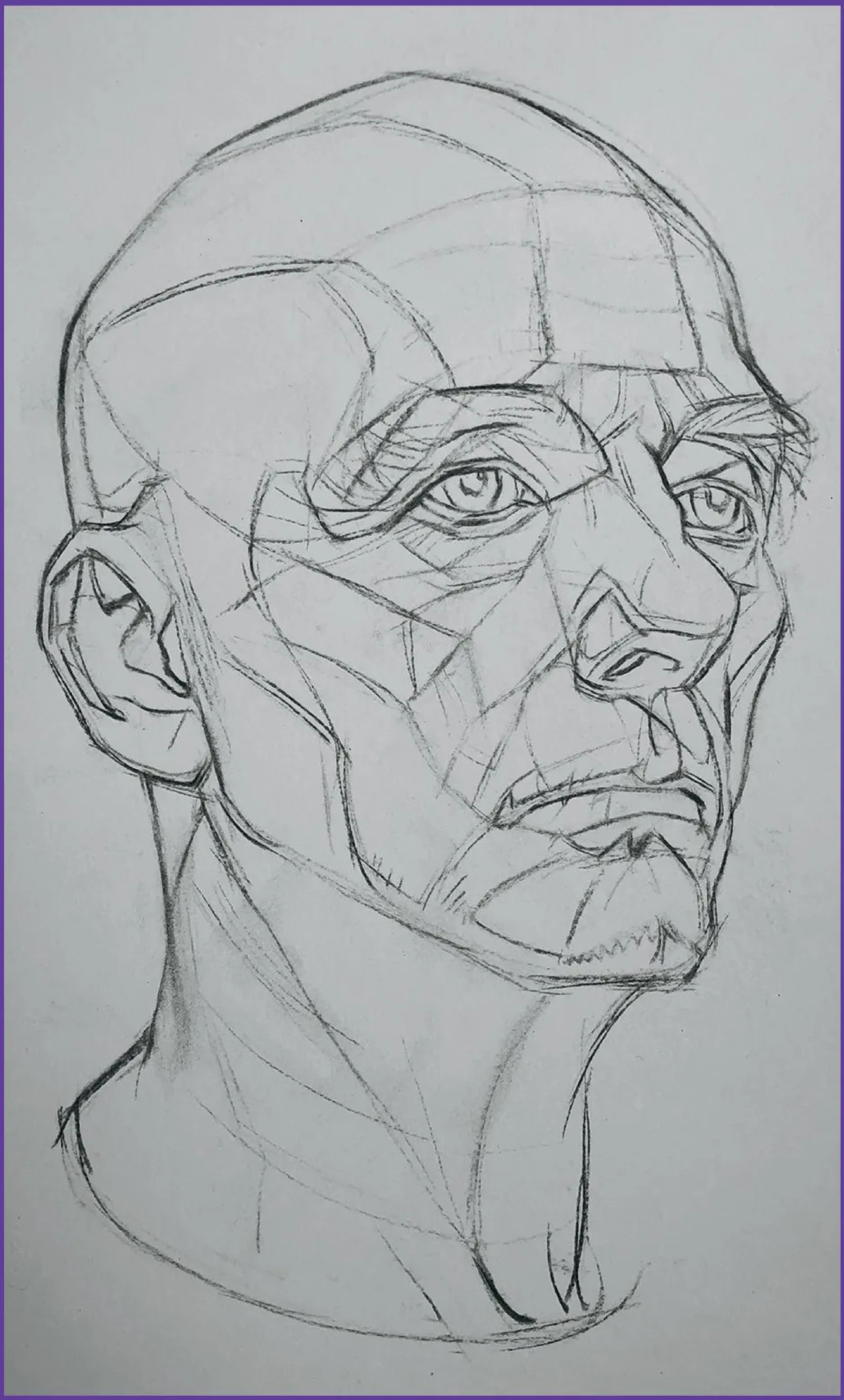
A ▼ Draw the shapes

Use vine charcoal to map the position of the head by marking the top, bottom and side boundaries with straight lines. Straight lines enable you to observe the subject as a whole and examine the relationships between key blocks so you can define them accurately on paper.

Draw a ball shape for the skull and a U-shape for the jaw. Establish the cross where the middle line of the face crosses the eyebrow line. Identify and divide the head into thirds: one-third from the hairline to the eyebrows, one-third from the eyebrows to the nose, and one-third from the nose to the chin. The lower lip is halfway between the nose and the chin. Avoid specific details – just map out the head's general proportions.

Continue to use straight lines to define the large shadow areas, such as the eye sockets. I'd draw the eye sockets shapes first, then the base of the nose shape before the mouth shapes. Define the approximate shapes of the head's outline and mark the eyebrow. Notice the shape of the chin's bottom plane, which is foreshortened because of the angle of the head.



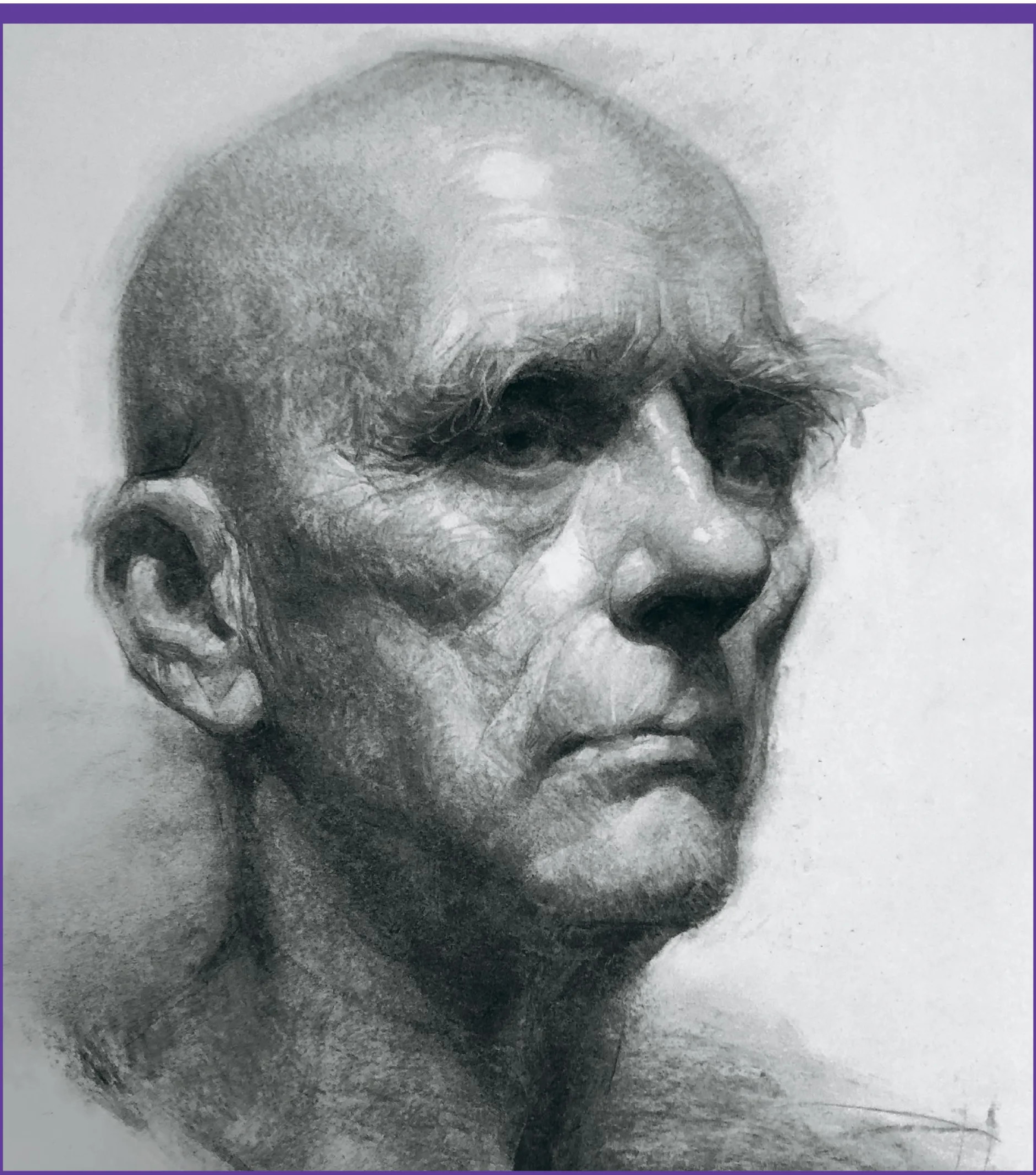


B ▲ Define planes

Continue to define the shape of the ear, which aligns with the brow line and the bottom of the nose. Define the planes of the forehead, cheekbones, nose and chin with straight lines. Study the proportions and relationships of the shapes to one another. Avoid adding details such as the pupils and nostrils for now.

Use lines to define areas of shadow and where planes meet, such as the front, sides and slope of the forehead, and the front, wings and base of the nose. Mark the shapes and positions of the brow arch, cheekbones, temporal bones, chin and jaw. Treat this drawing as a blueprint.

Use the broad side of the vine charcoal to begin blocking in values to build the structure of the head. Remember that all objects have light, middle, and dark values when exposed to light. Hatch the shadow areas of the head, such as the eye sockets, and continue into the dark shadow of the cheekbone and other shadow areas. Train your eyes to unify the shadow areas, while avoid seeing individual facial details. You could reduce the textures by blending the surface with your fingertips or a stump.



C

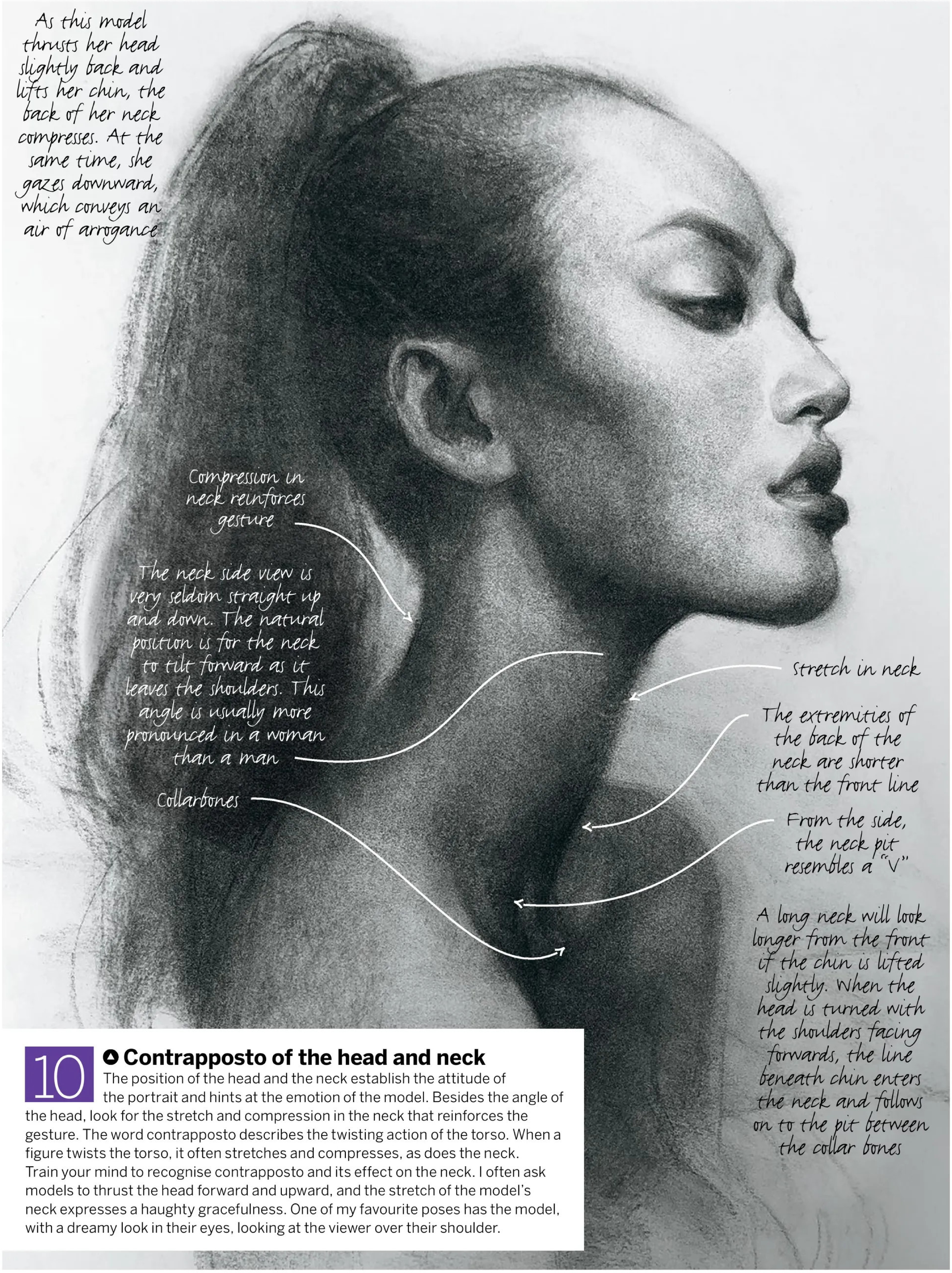
Start detailing

In each area where you work on details, reexamine the shapes of the different parts, paying attention to the strokes so that there's variation in hard and soft edges. Wherever you add detail, shade the entire area first, then pull out highlights with an eraser and then use a charcoal pencil to emphasise the shadows. Wrinkles can enrich the drawing with texture and details. Wrinkles shouldn't stand out and must correspond to the shapes of the facial features. Focus on conveying an impression of wrinkles, rather than drawing all of them.

Finish by reexamining the light, mid-tone and dark values, as well as the edges of the face. Each of the three major values should be further rendered into three more values, together with the highlight, for a wide value range that captures the forms. The edges of the face shouldn't form one continuous line, but instead contain rhythm, spatial relationships and variation.

Reinforce the boundary between light and dark on the chin to solidify this facial feature and softly represent the structure and texture. Finally, reinforce the dark areas even more by adding willow charcoal with vine charcoal.

The sketch



As this model thrusts her head slightly back and lifts her chin, the back of her neck compresses. At the same time, she gazes downward, which conveys an air of arrogance

Compression in neck reinforces gesture

The neck side view is very seldom straight up and down. The natural position is for the neck to tilt forward as it leaves the shoulders. This angle is usually more pronounced in a woman than a man

Collarbones

Stretch in neck

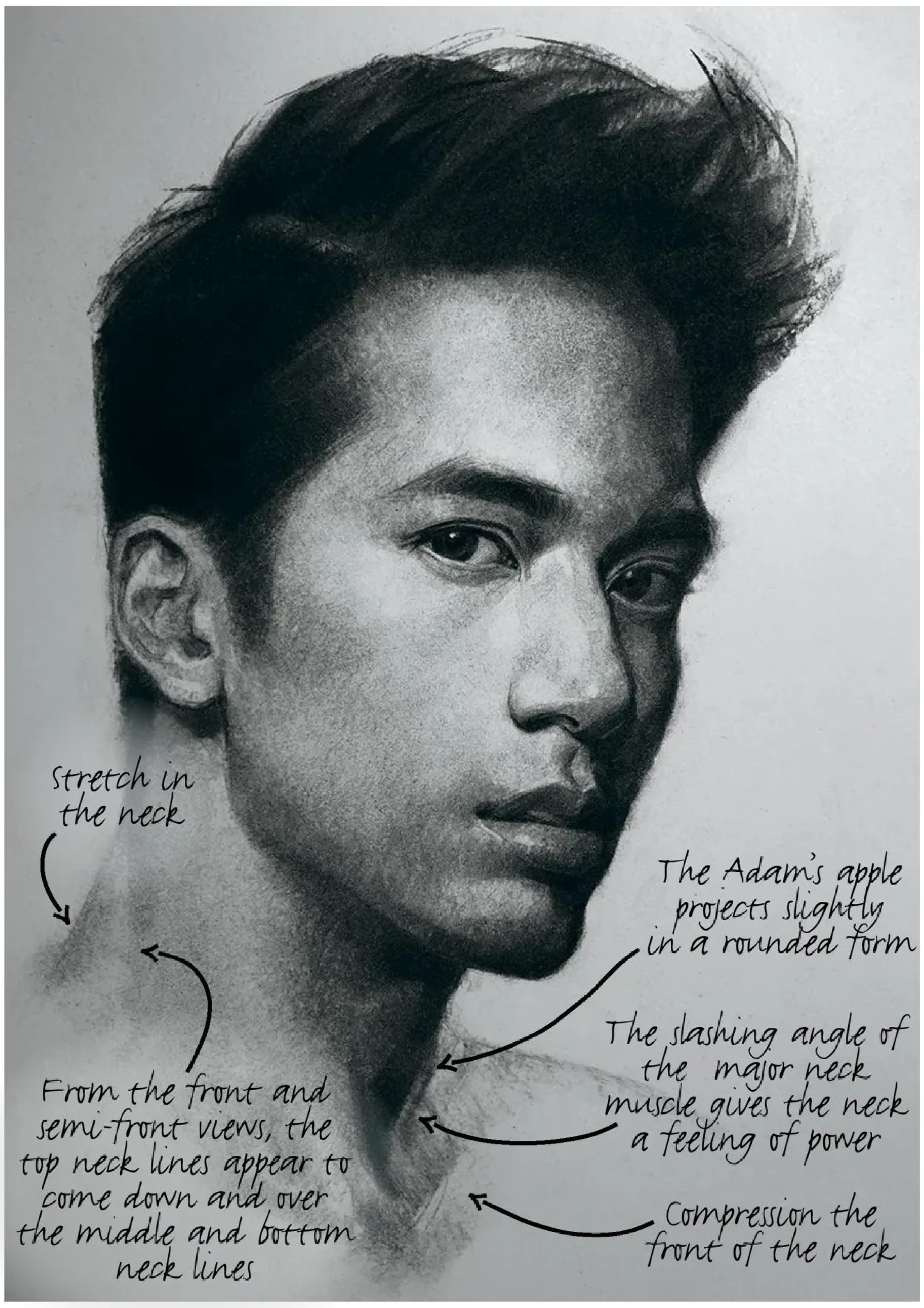
The extremities of the back of the neck are shorter than the front line

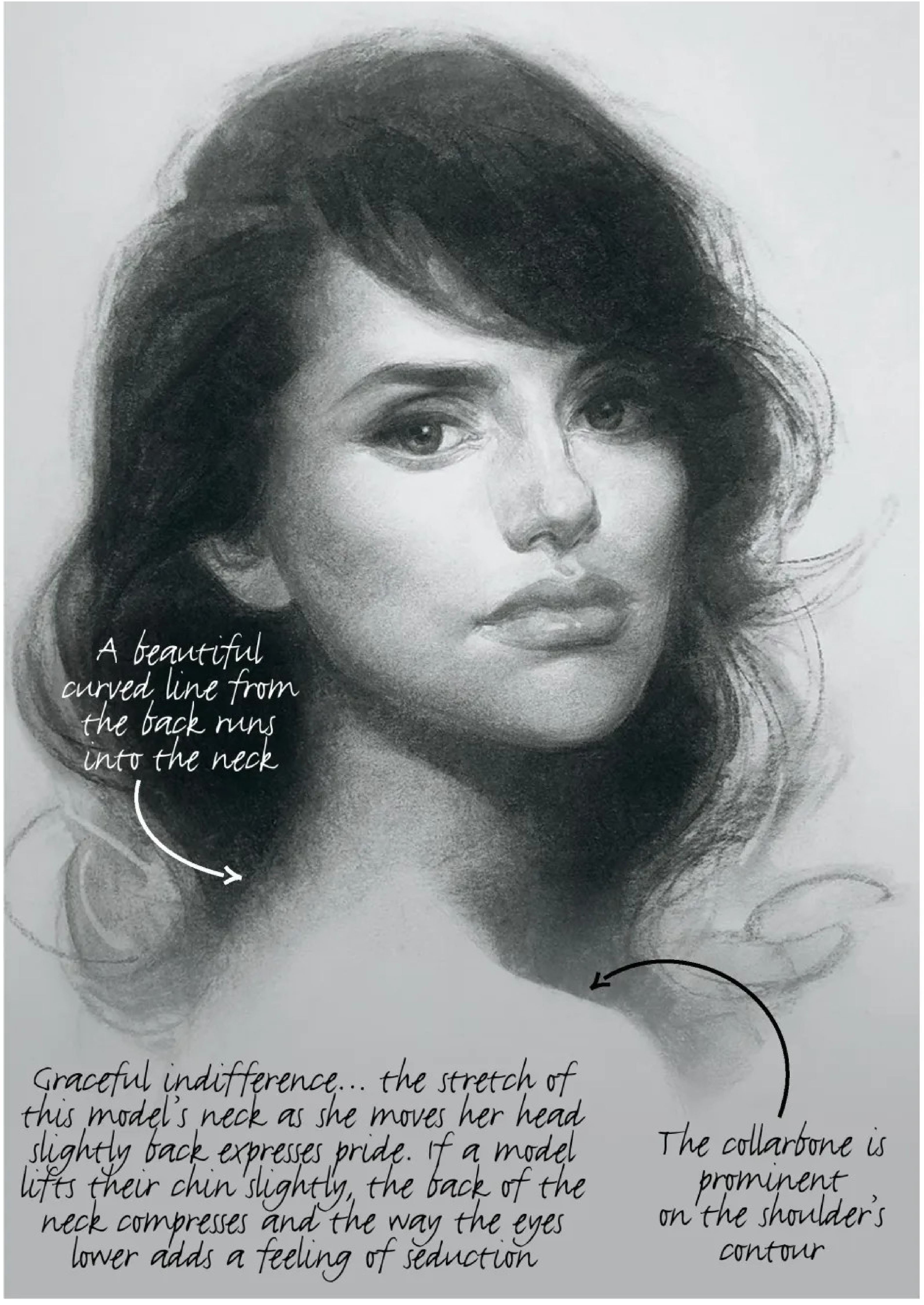
From the side, the neck pit resembles a "V"

A long neck will look longer from the front if the chin is lifted slightly. When the head is turned with the shoulders facing forwards, the line beneath chin enters the neck and follows on to the pit between the collar bones

10 Contrapposto of the head and neck

The position of the head and the neck establish the attitude of the portrait and hints at the emotion of the model. Besides the angle of the head, look for the stretch and compression in the neck that reinforces the gesture. The word contrapposto describes the twisting action of the torso. When a figure twists the torso, it often stretches and compresses, as does the neck. Train your mind to recognise contrapposto and its effect on the neck. I often ask models to thrust the head forward and upward, and the stretch of the model's neck expresses a haughty gracefulness. One of my favourite poses has the model, with a dreamy look in their eyes, looking at the viewer over their shoulder.

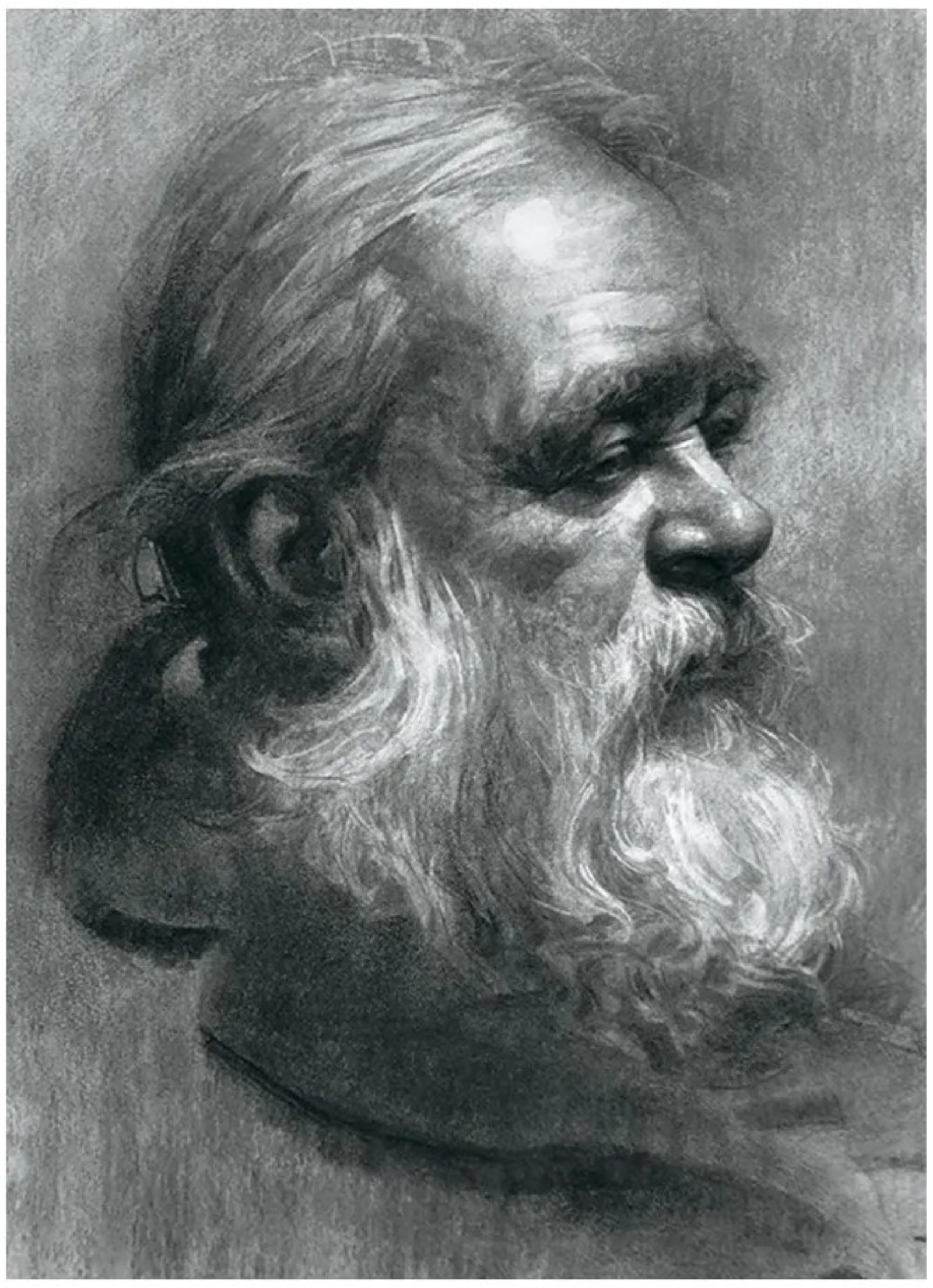

Stretch in the neck
The Adam's apple projects slightly in a rounded form
The slashing angle of the major neck muscle gives the neck a feeling of power
From the front and semi-front views, the top neck lines appear to come down and over the middle and bottom neck lines
Compression the front of the neck

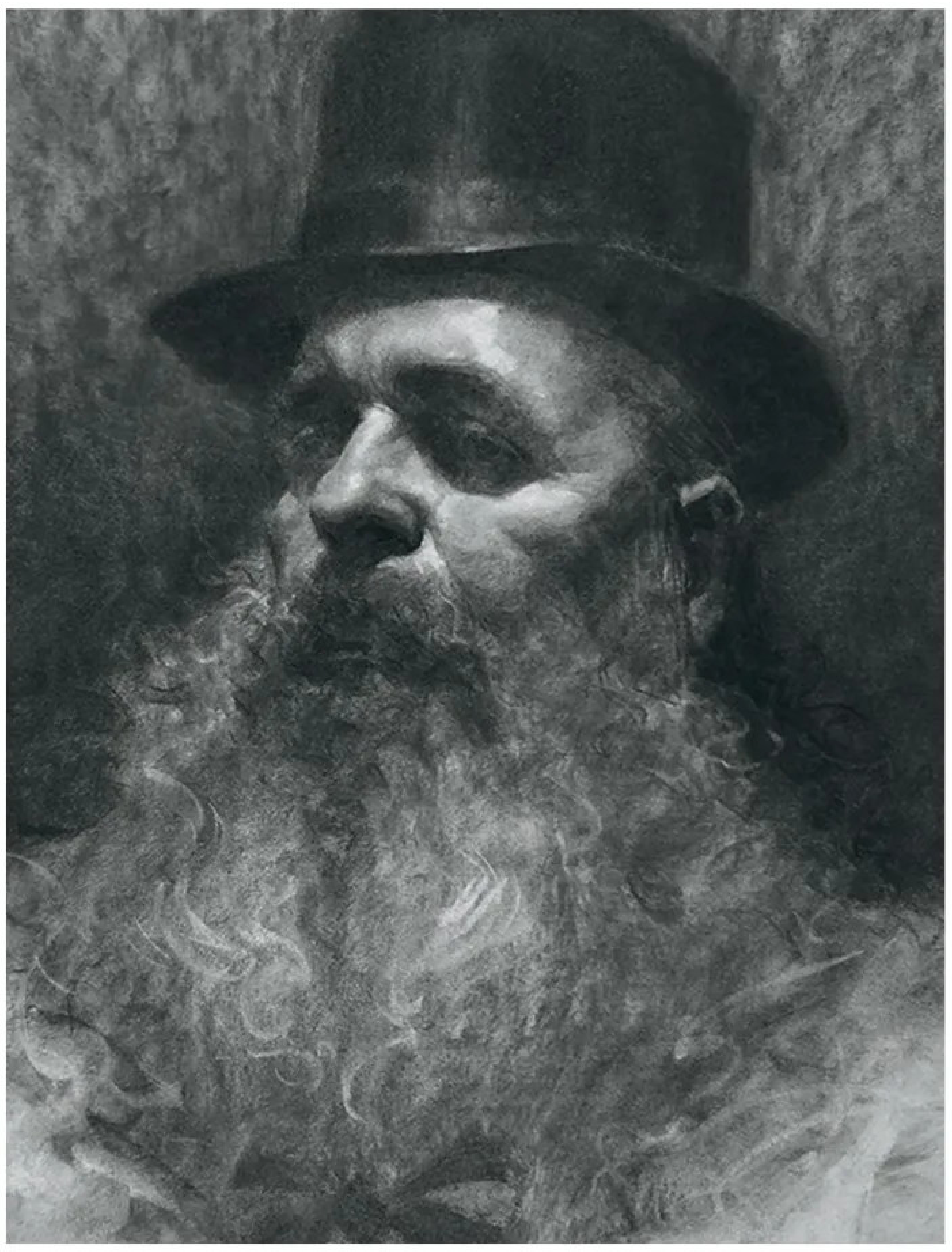

A beautiful curved line from the back runs into the neck
Graceful indifference… the stretch of this model's neck as she moves her head slightly back expresses pride. If a model lifts their chin slightly, the back of the neck compresses and the way the eyes lower adds a feeling of seduction
The collarbone is prominent on the shoulder's contour

11 ▲ Head drawing versus portrait drawing

There's a difference between head drawing and portrait drawing. Head drawing focuses on shapes, plane changes, anatomy, form and the perspective of the head. Portrait drawing is an artist's representation of a person's spirit: their expression, likeness, personality and mood. The "form" of the head refers only to the external appearance of the face.

To draw spirited portraits, you must consider what message – or perception – a portrait will communicate. The artist's personal perception is the common denominator of every work of art he or she creates. Each artwork reflects the unique perspective of the artist, no matter the style or subject. I would say that a good drawing features something that comes from within the artist.



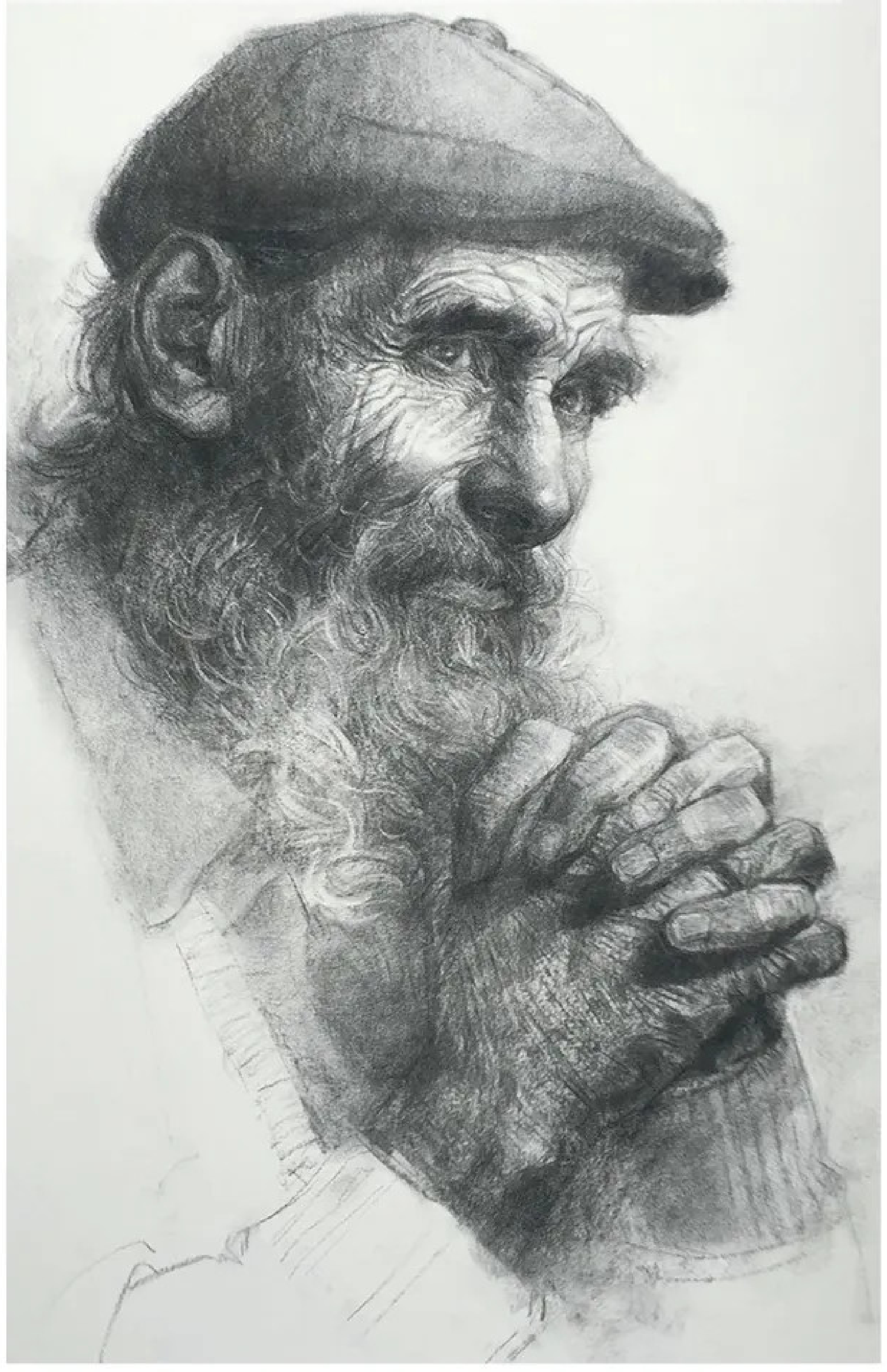


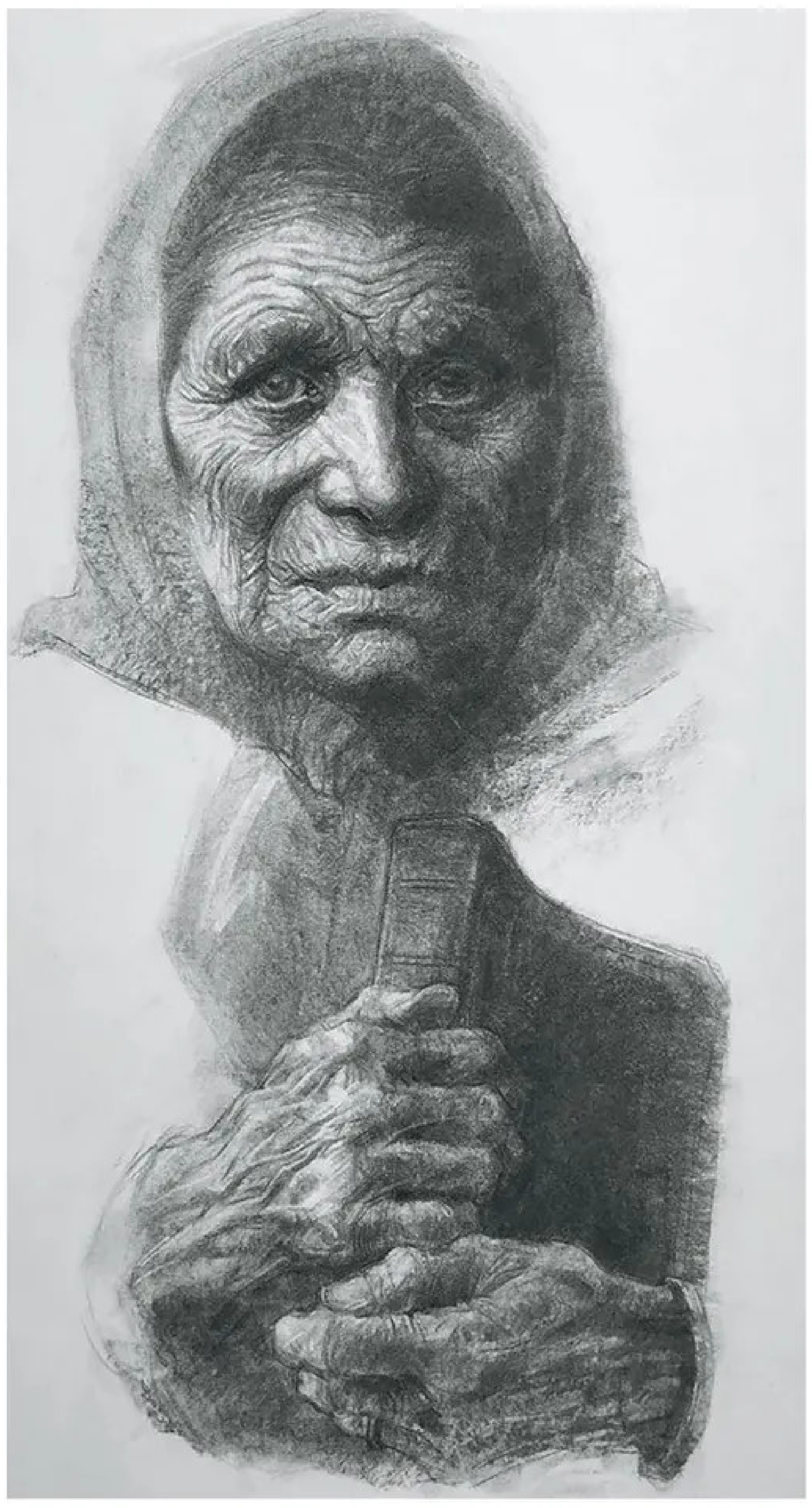
12 ◀ Facial hair

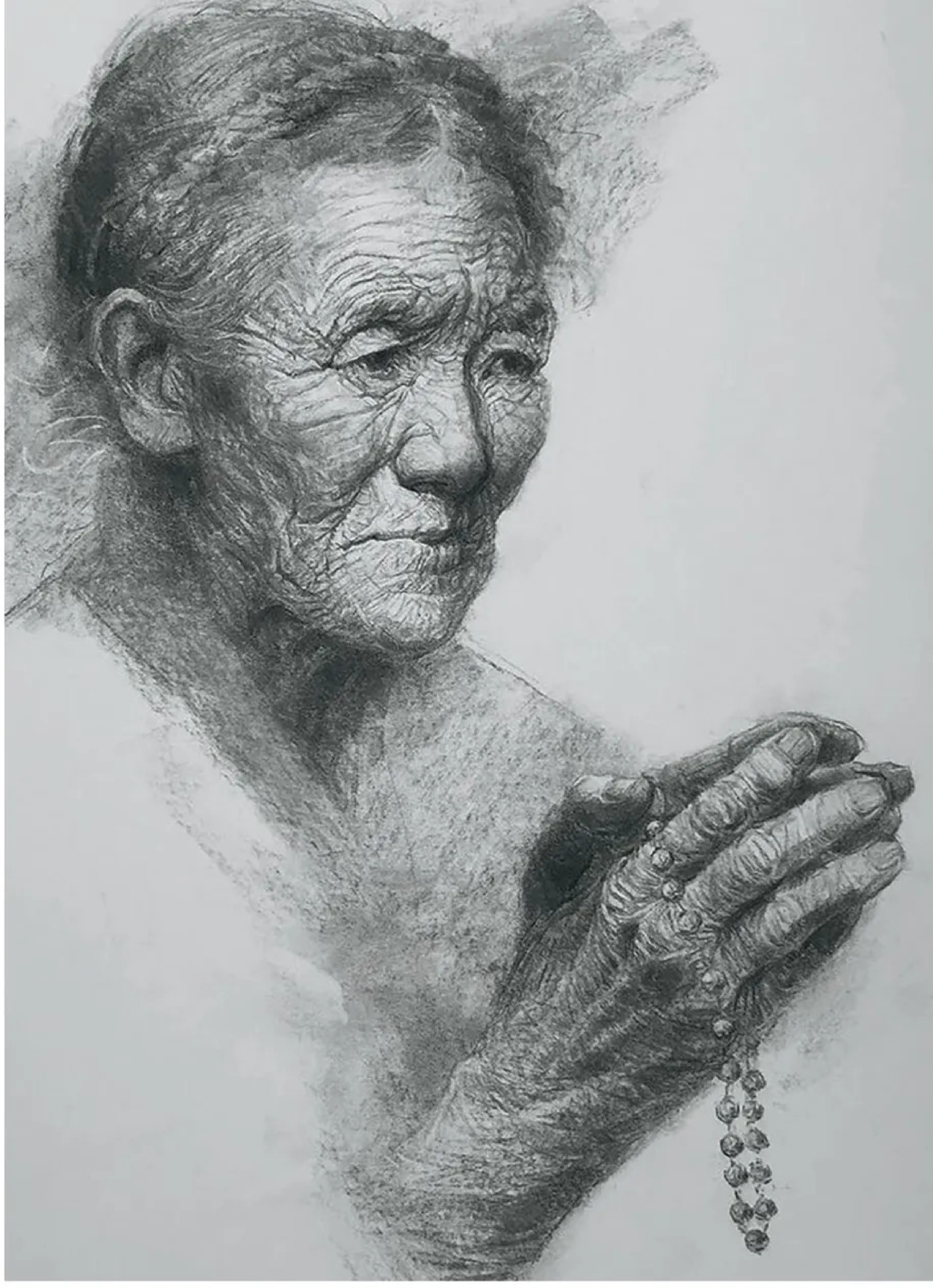
Every moustache or beard is different, but there are several key things to look for. The nose casts a shadow on the moustache, and the moustache casts a shadow on the mouth. If the moustache is very full, it may cover the upper lip. Think of the moustache as a large upper lip that wraps around the mouth, producing larger shadows. Follow the light and shadow on the head if the planes aren't visible in the facial hair.

Pay attention to the beard's shape, and train your eye to see that hair has no definable edge, like smoke. Rather than drawing individual hairs, treat the beard as a mass of light and shadow, keeping the edges soft.

The sketch



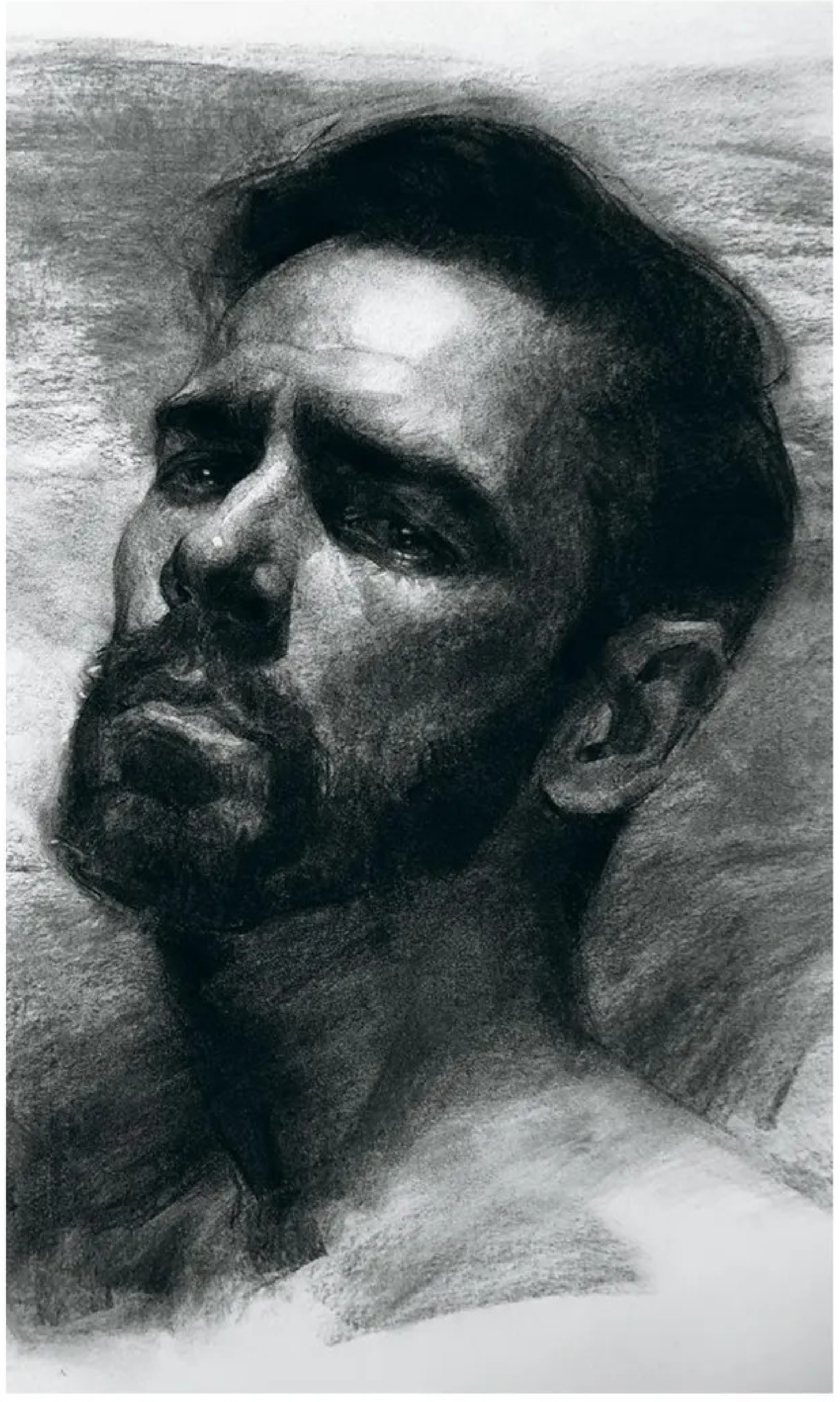


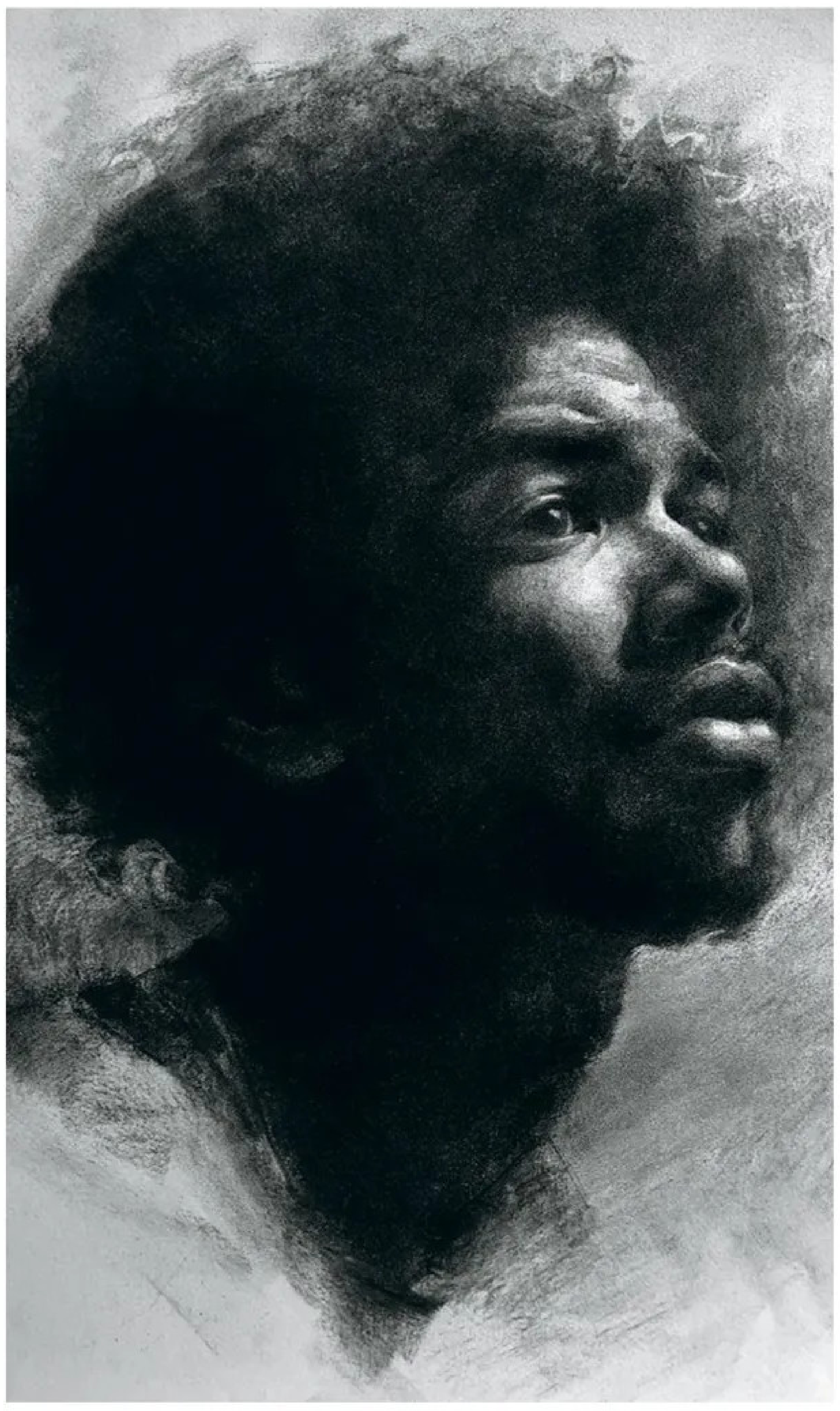


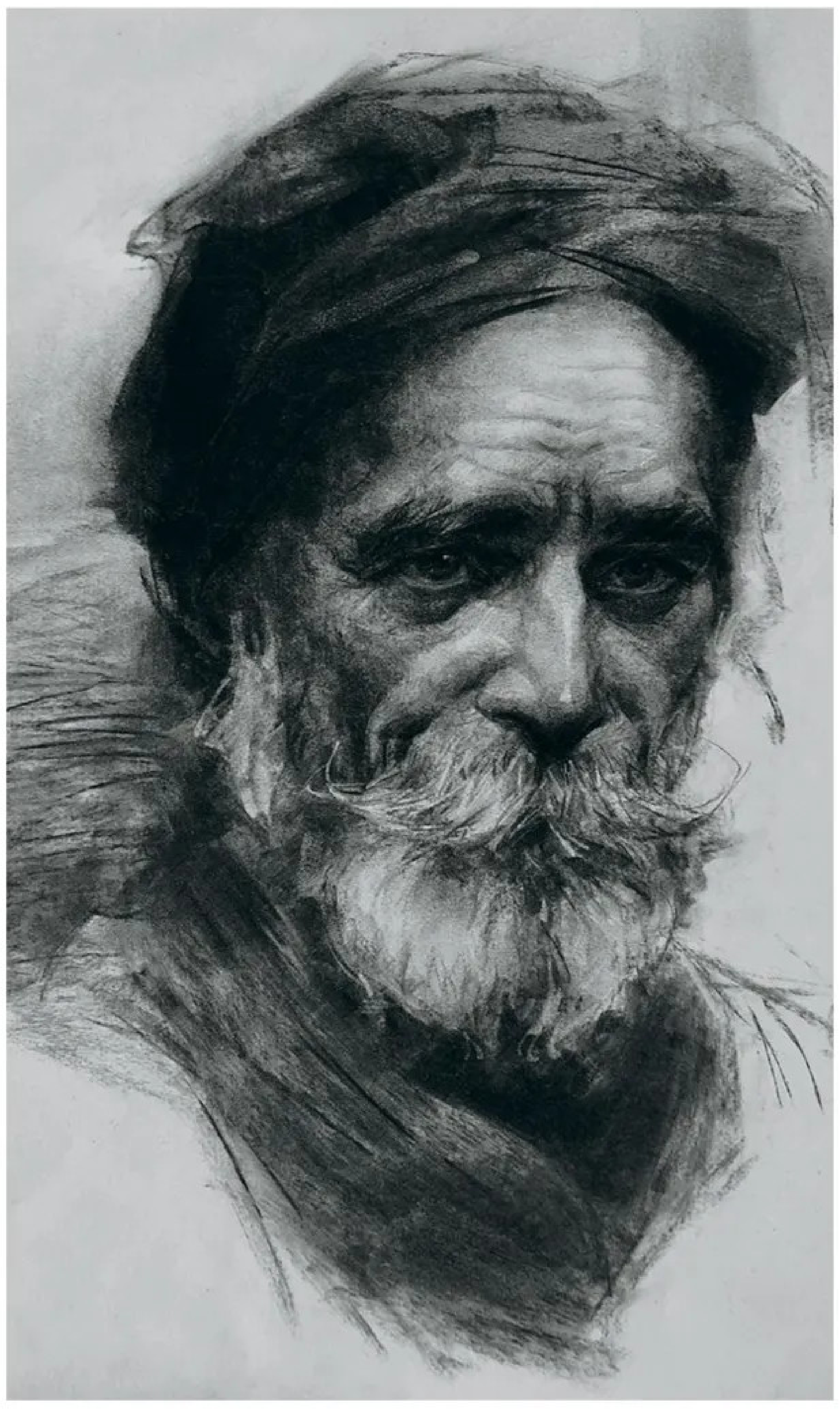
13 Express mood by incorporating the hands

Hands add emotion and feeling to a drawing. Including the hands can turn a regular portrait into a character study: a candid, unposed approach that reveals the subject's personality. On a philosophical level, hands represent the way we touch and feel objects, or even other people – how we "connect" with the outside world.

Hands deserve a place of honour in a portrait drawing. Often the most expressive and revealing portraits incorporate the hands and props. They tell a story and establish a serious mood. Note that hands are a contributing but subordinate element of the drawing and shouldn't detract from the portrait. Because the face remains the focal point, render hands with softer tones and less-defined shape and form.



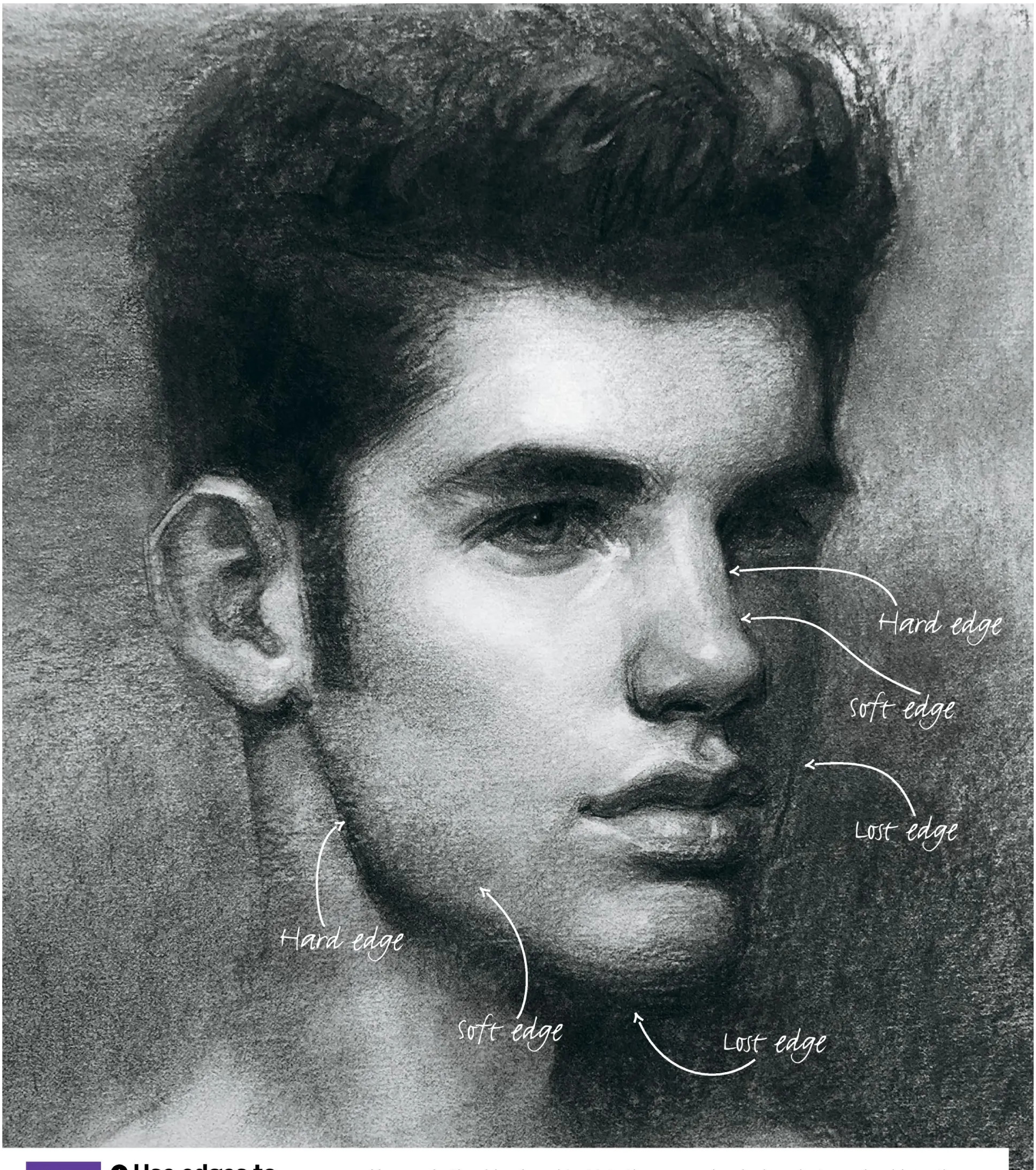




14 Consider a textured background

The texture background can play a key role in the visual statement of a drawing. A background can give an artwork a soft, calm look, or liven a piece with an energetic striking approach. Incorporating a creative background in your art shouldn't take the focus away from the subject.

Concentrate on the lights and darks of the subject when selecting a background treatment. If the subject is light on one side, a dark tone behind will show the contours more clearly. Use the background to show off the contrast and enhance your work, not compete with it. There's no formula for achieving the right background, so be creative!



15 ▲ Use edges to convey form

When an artist mixes soft and hard lines, or edges, in the right places, it sets up a path for the viewer's eyes, creating the illusion of three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface. When edges are soft, an element can seem to recede – it doesn't stand out quite as much.

You can further blend a subject into the background by making its lines soft. A soft-edged drawing creates a fuzzy, dreamy effect, whereas a drawing with too many hard edges will look unnatural, creating visual tension because too many areas are competing. This will confuse viewers because there's nowhere for their eyes to rest. I don't mean you should never use hard edges, but you should use them sparingly for emphasis, keeping lines hard at your focal point.

In my portrait drawings, I generally use a proportion of roughly 85 per cent soft lines and 15 per cent hard lines. If you understand and master the power of controlling edges in your drawings, you'll be amazed at how much your portraits will improve.

Animate the face

Lancelot Richardson demonstrates how the face changes with different expressions, and how to express this in our drawings

Emotional expressions boil down to six basic 'core expressions' that we make. We are going to look at how the face changes with each of these expressions, and how the features are likely to move around. From here we can adjust the intensity of an expression. For instance, annoyance is a mild version of anger, while rage is a very extreme one. We can also combine them to make new expressions, such as a happy expression combining with a surprised one to make something akin to delight.

Most of the changes that create expressions stem from the muscles of the face, with the jaw occasionally playing a role. These small muscles pull the features in different directions.

Being able to capture the subtlety of the changes with each different facial expression is a real challenge, as we don't always read them correctly. It is easy to get a confusing result, where the meaning of an expression is unclear, or for things to look unnatural. It helps to understand how the changes in the face and features relate to emotions so you can look for them in your subjects.

Try to use a light touch to indicate them and avoid detailing out all the creases and muscles, or things will look too heavy. A good way to practise drawing different facial expressions is to pose for yourself with a mirror. This is a traditional exercise of animators, who need authentic expressions for their characters.

About **LANCELOT**
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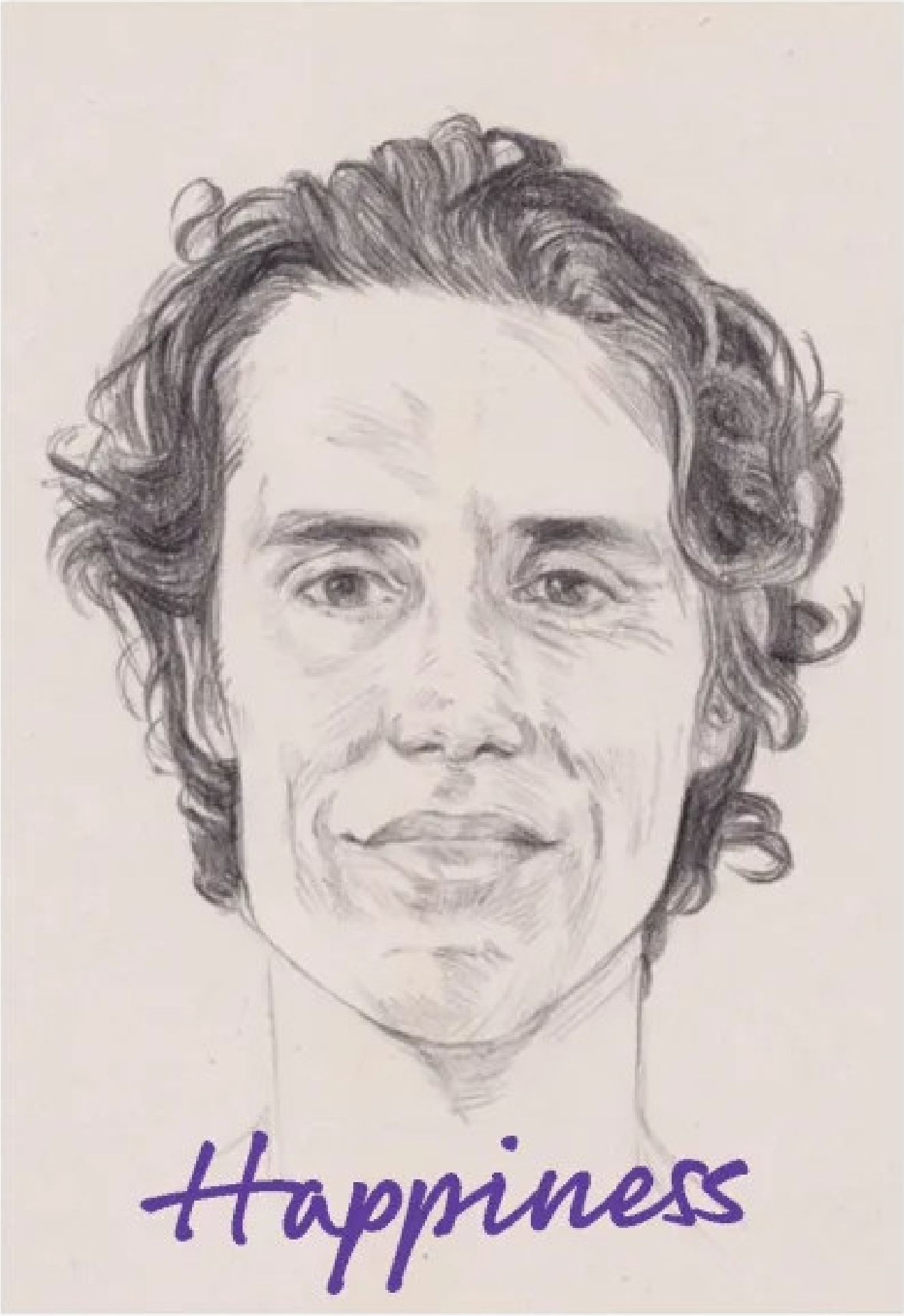
Lancelot Richardson is a painter and freelance illustrator. He also works at independent drawing school Draw Brighton as a life drawing tutor. Alongside life drawing, he also teaches imaginative drawing techniques there.
www.lancelotrichardson.com

Core expressions

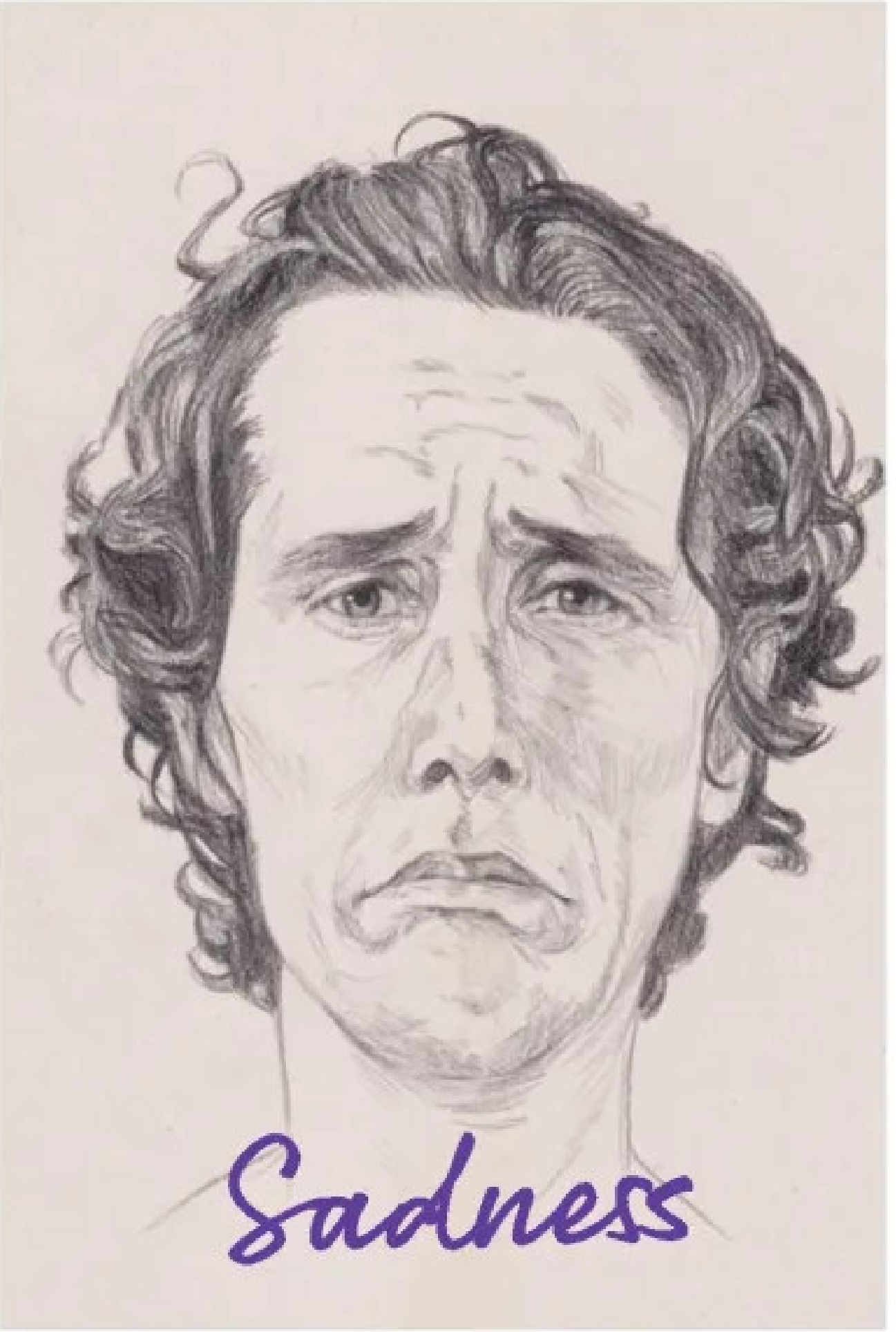
The six basic expressions

These six expressions form the foundation of how emotions animate the face. While there are more than six expressions, many others we can make, at least as emotional responses, are effectively different intensities, or combinations of expressions.

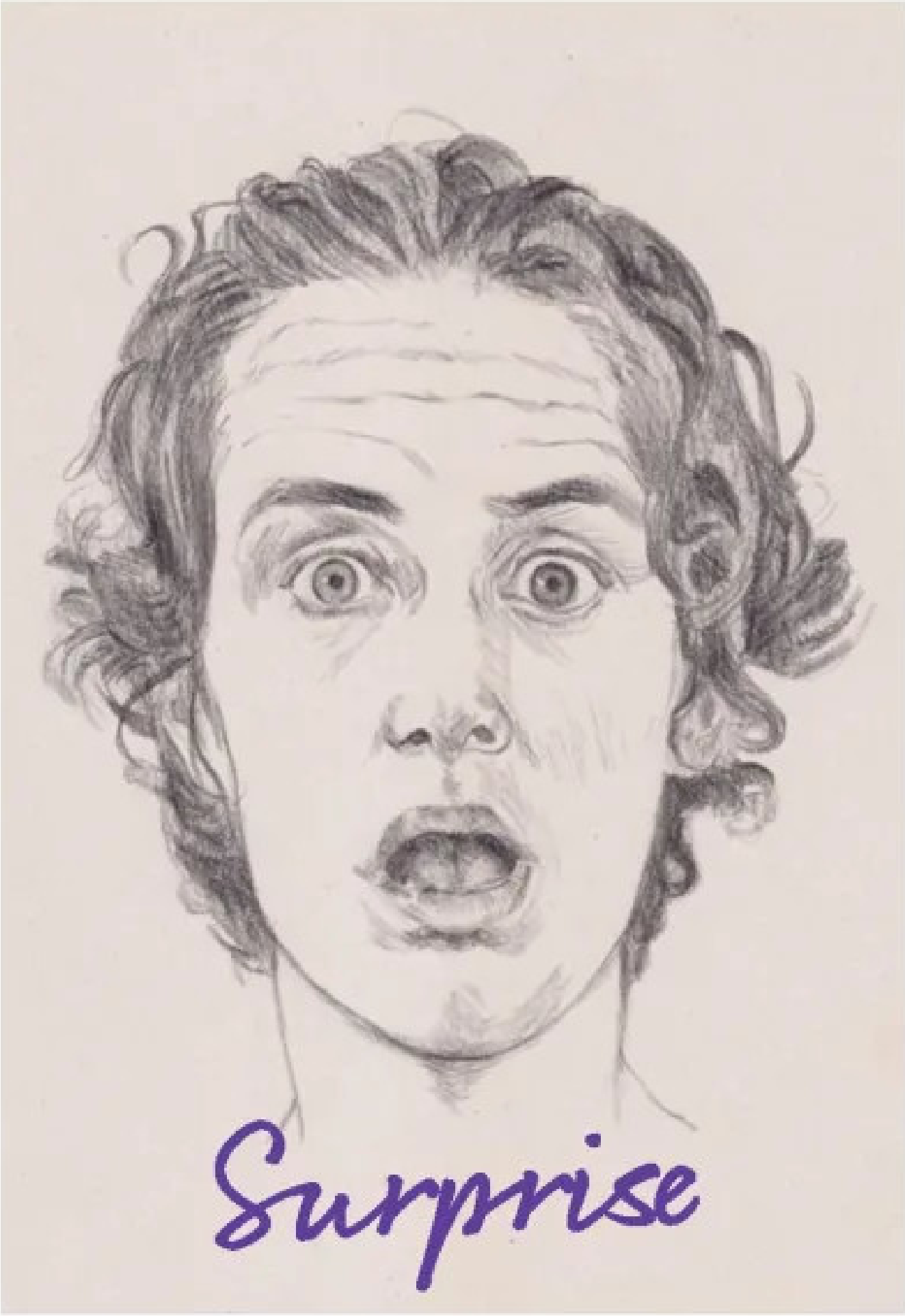
We can see that the mouth, eyes and eyebrows carry the most meaning. In some expressions, the surfaces of the face crease up, such as the forehead and cheek, and sometimes the nose, while the ears do absolutely nothing. There are two things that are key to portraying facial expressions well. The first is subtlety, or a light touch; avoid making hard, dark lines around features or for creases in the face. Instead use soft lines, broken lines, or little patches of shading. The other key thing is that we are intensely sensitive to shapes in the face, and tiny changes will alter expressions. For instance, the shape of the whites of the eyes help us capture the amount of visible iris, and overall shape of the eye.



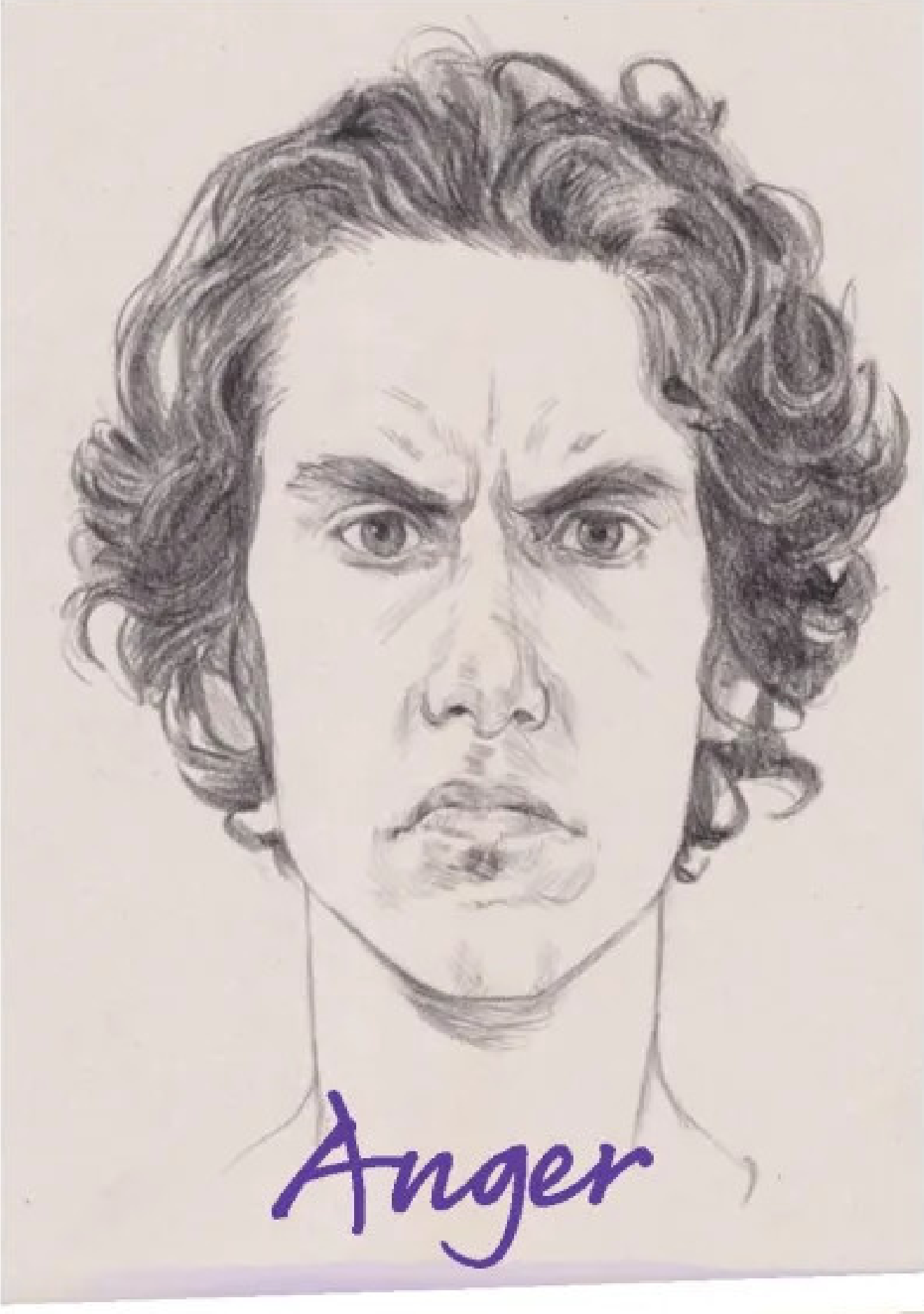
Happiness



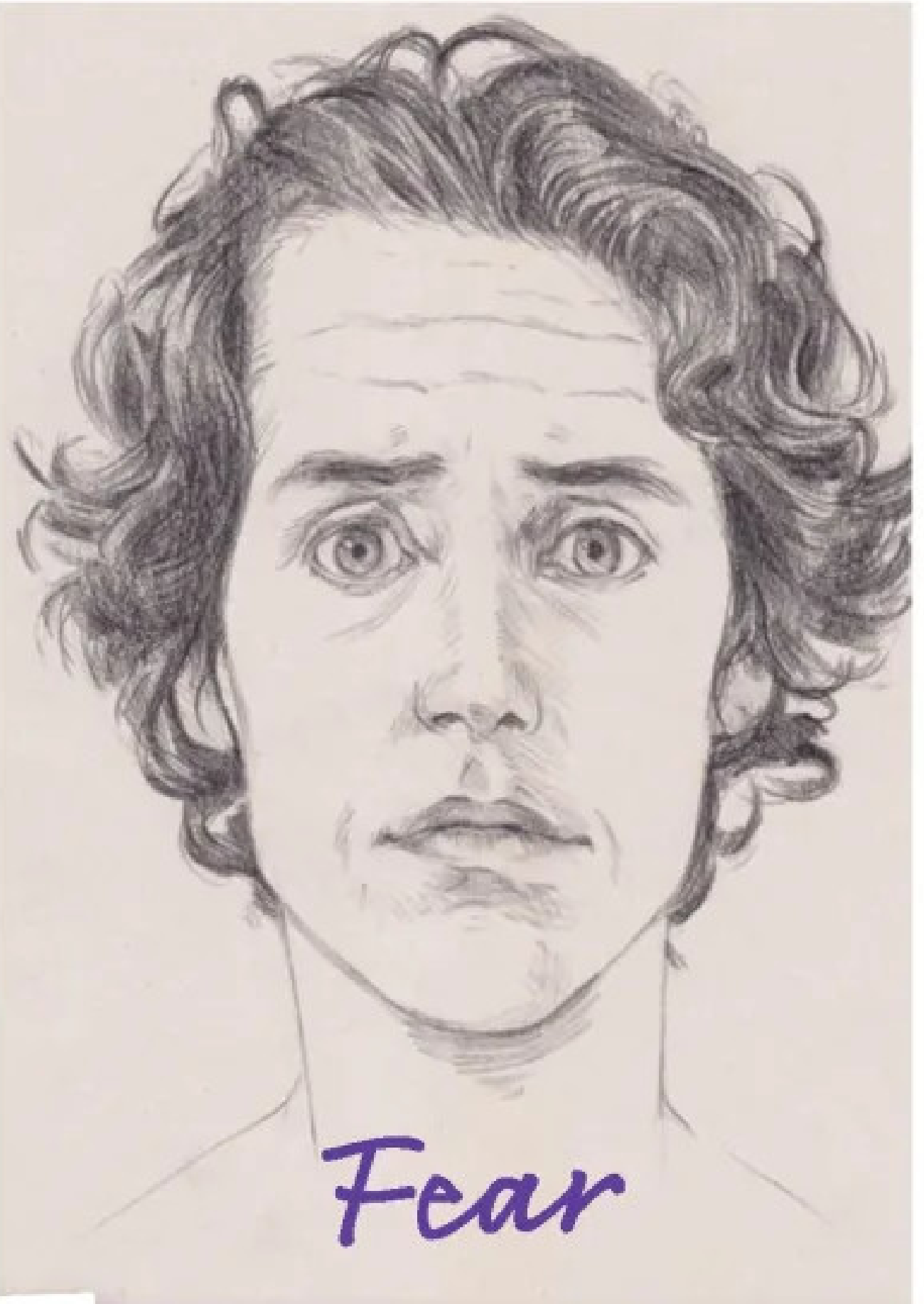
Sadness



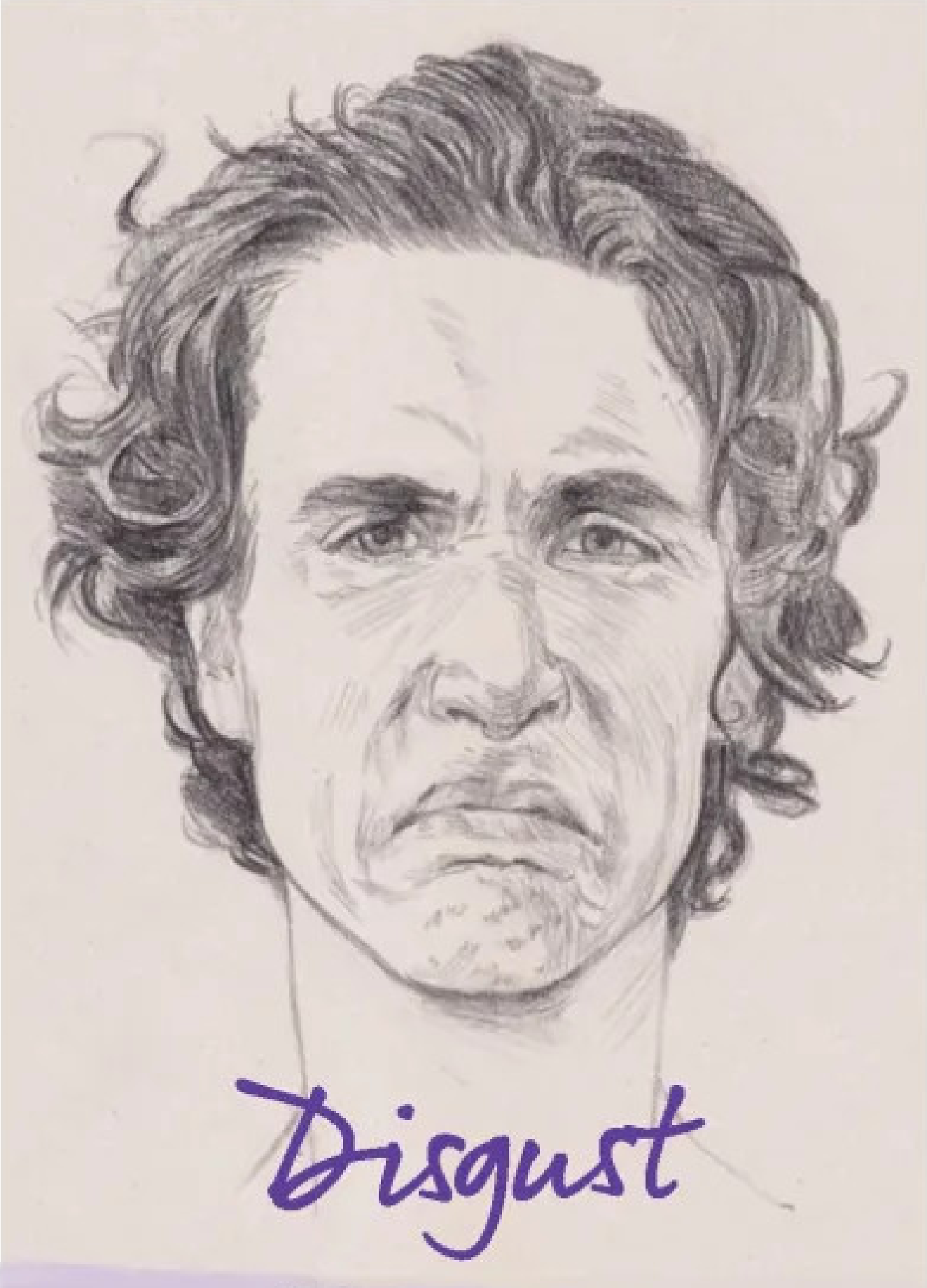
Surprise



Anger



Fear



Disgust

Materials

- ☐ Seawhite Newsprint paper
- ☐ Conté à Paris - Pierre Noire B pencil
- ☐ Kneaded eraser
- ☐ Electric eraser

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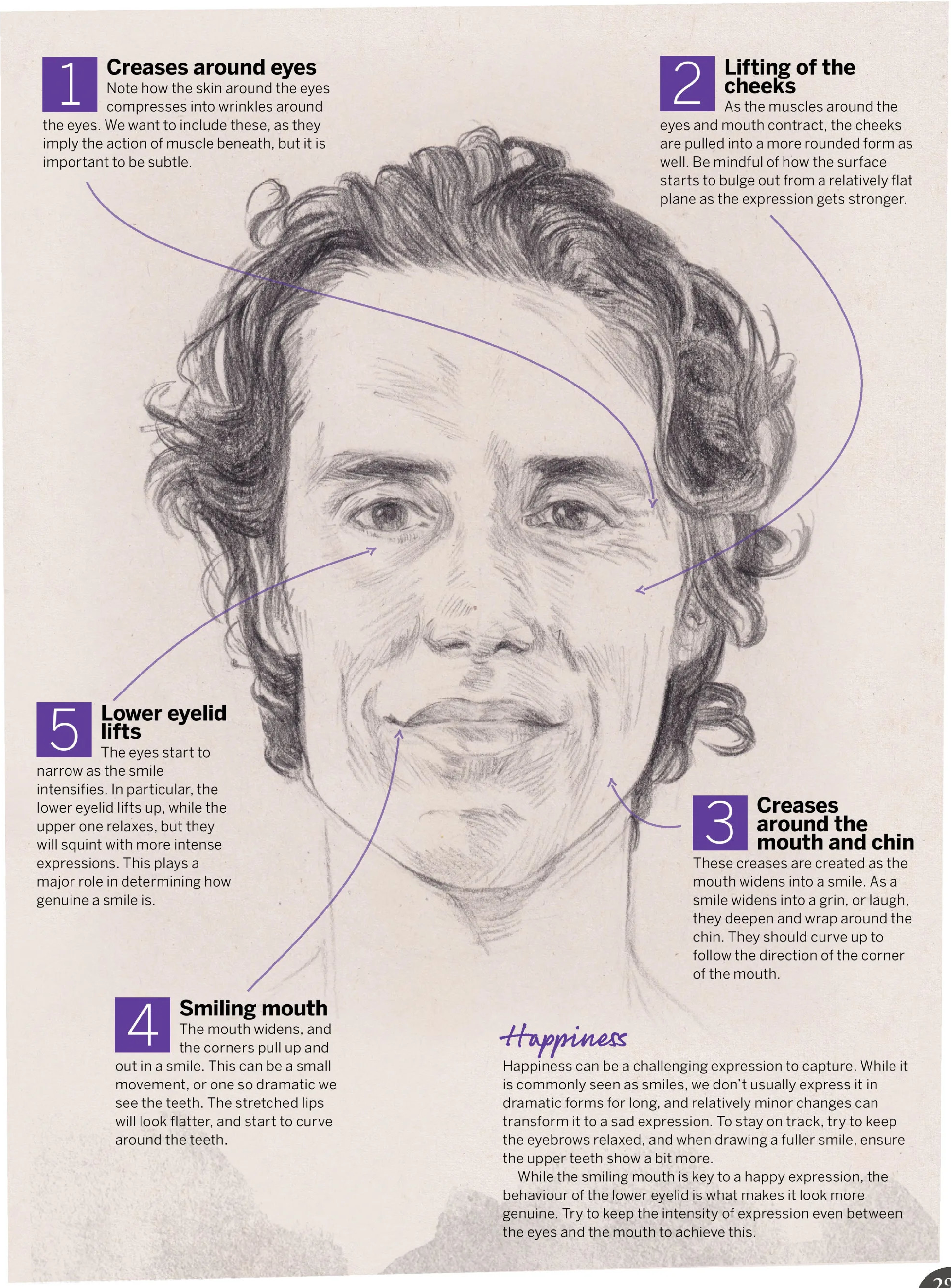


1 Creases around eyes

Note how the skin around the eyes compresses into wrinkles around the eyes. We want to include these, as they imply the action of muscle beneath, but it is important to be subtle.

2 Lifting of the cheeks

As the muscles around the eyes and mouth contract, the cheeks are pulled into a more rounded form as well. Be mindful of how the surface starts to bulge out from a relatively flat plane as the expression gets stronger.

5 Lower eyelid lifts

The eyes start to narrow as the smile intensifies. In particular, the lower eyelid lifts up, while the upper one relaxes, but they will squint with more intense expressions. This plays a major role in determining how genuine a smile is.

3 Creases around the mouth and chin

These creases are created as the mouth widens into a smile. As a smile widens into a grin, or laugh, they deepen and wrap around the chin. They should curve up to follow the direction of the corner of the mouth.

4 Smiling mouth

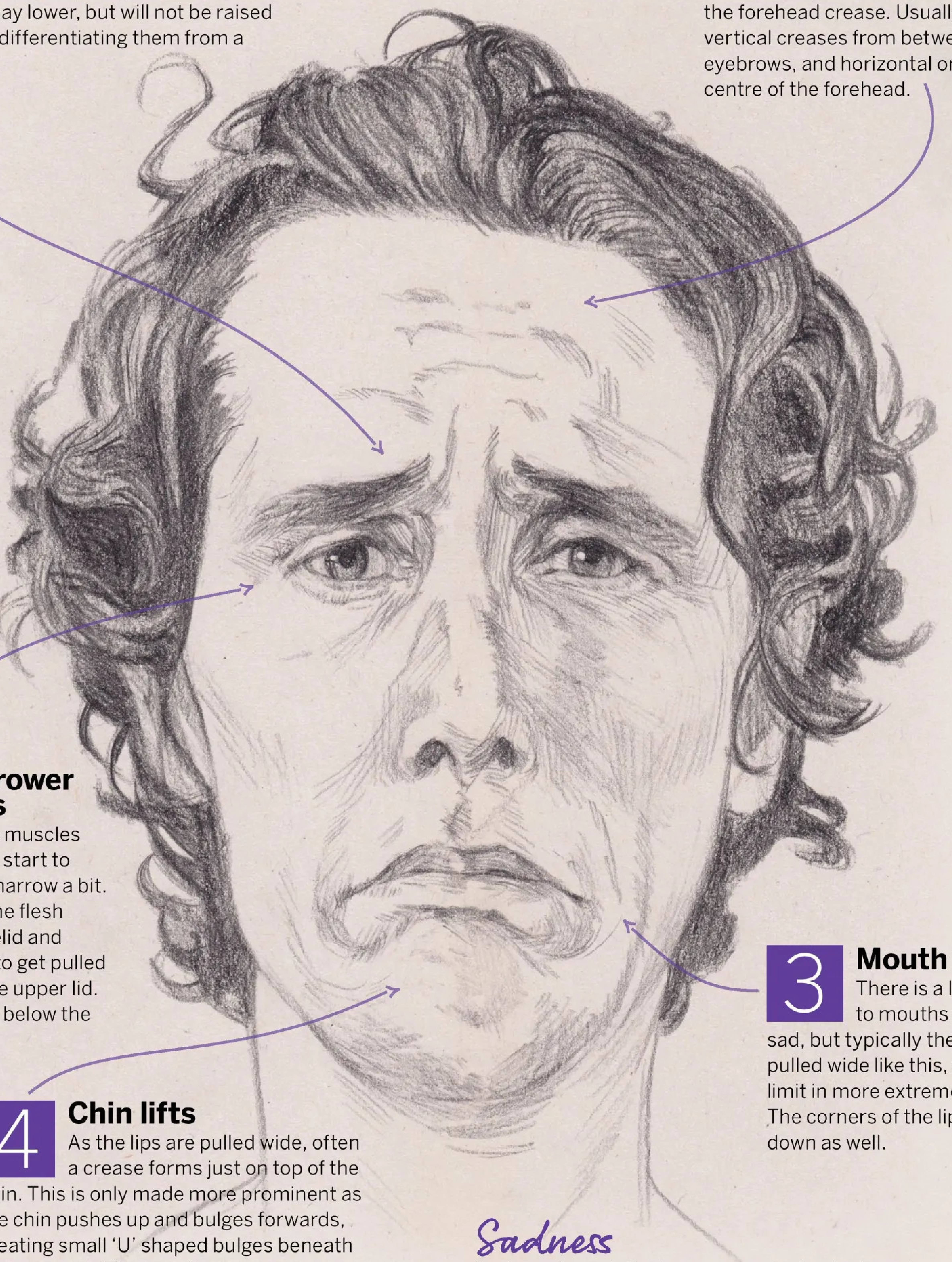
The mouth widens, and the corners pull up and out in a smile. This can be a small movement, or one so dramatic we see the teeth. The stretched lips will look flatter, and start to curve around the teeth.

Happiness

Happiness can be a challenging expression to capture. While it is commonly seen as smiles, we don't usually express it in dramatic forms for long, and relatively minor changes can transform it to a sad expression. To stay on track, try to keep the eyebrows relaxed, and when drawing a fuller smile, ensure the upper teeth show a bit more.

While the smiling mouth is key to a happy expression, the behaviour of the lower eyelid is what makes it look more genuine. Try to keep the intensity of expression even between the eyes and the mouth to achieve this.

The sketch



1 **Eyebrows turn up**
The eyebrows turn up in the centre, but do not lift at the sides. This is quite pronounced so the skin may bulge a little. Sometimes they may lower, but will not be raised in this expression, differentiating them from a fearful expression.

2 **Forehead wrinkles**
In all but the most subtle sad expressions, you will likely see the forehead crease. Usually we get vertical creases from between the eyebrows, and horizontal ones up the centre of the forehead.

5 **Narrower eyes**
As the muscles around the eyes start to tense, the eyes narrow a bit. Above the eye the flesh between the eyelid and eyebrow starts to get pulled down against the upper lid. We see a crease below the lower eyelid.

3 **Mouth widens**
There is a lot of variation to mouths that read as sad, but typically they will be pulled wide like this, often to the limit in more extreme expressions. The corners of the lips tend to turn down as well.

4 **Chin lifts**
As the lips are pulled wide, often a crease forms just on top of the chin. This is only made more prominent as the chin pushes up and bulges forwards, creating small 'U' shaped bulges beneath the corners of the mouth.

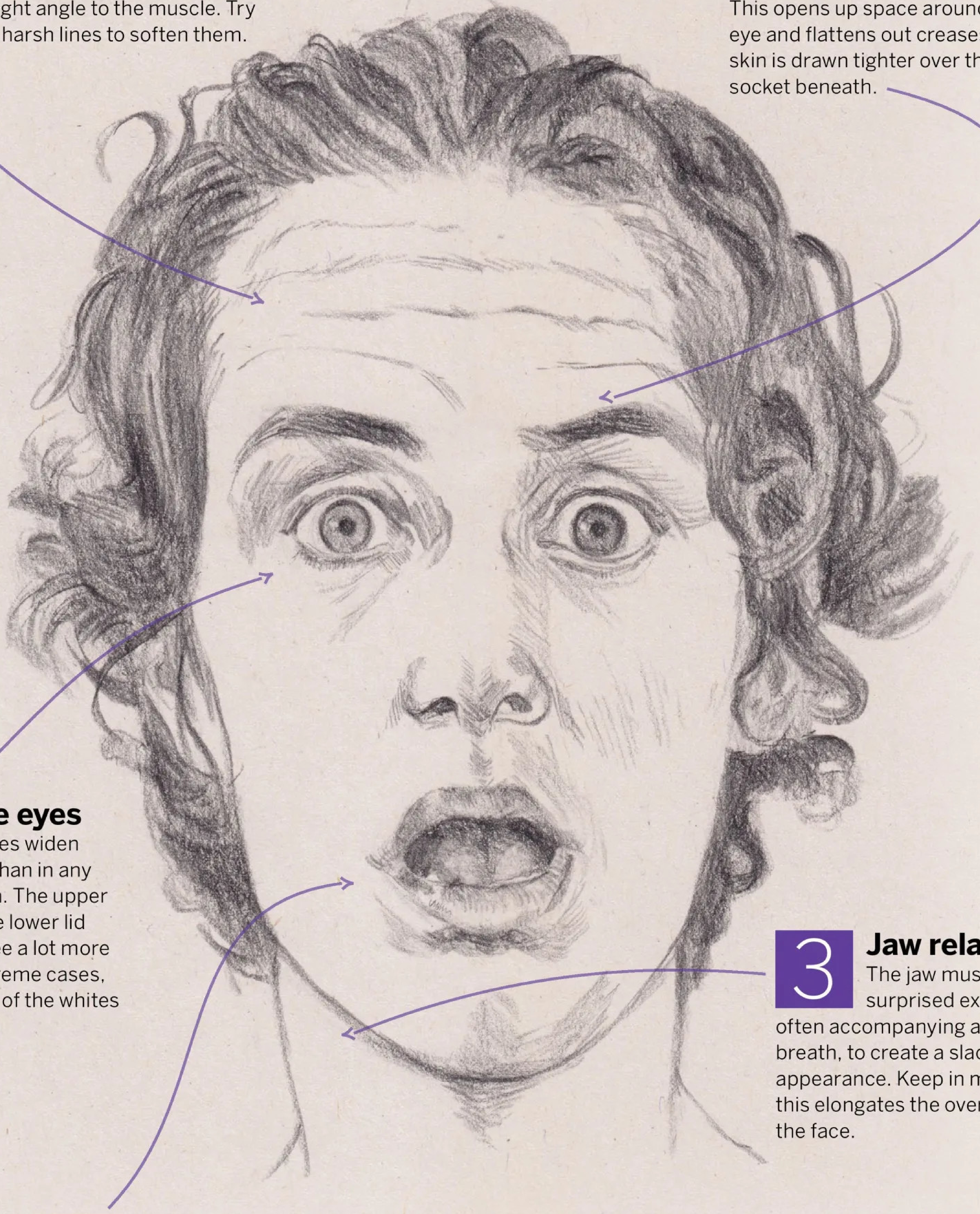
Sadness

Sadness is a relatively easy expression to draw, because it creates such clear changes in our expressions. The characteristic turn of the eyebrows is probably the most recognisable thing about a sad expression. As sadness intensifies into crying, the mouth stretches out sideways and the eyes start to narrow, closing completely.

Be mindful of creases around the face in this expression, especially for more restrained expressions where someone is trying to hold back, as they are often a good indicator to the tense muscles underneath. Another thing to watch out for is the softening borders to the lips as they stretch out and lose their shadow definition.

Drawing teeth

Take care if you want to include teeth! An expression can quickly dip into frightening territory with too much emphasis on them. Try to avoid outlining each individual tooth, and instead look for the shape the teeth make first. Avoid placing hard lines between them.



1 Forehead wrinkles

As the eyebrows lift up, the muscles pulling them cause the forehead to wrinkle. These wrinkles are occurring at a right angle to the muscle. Try to break up any harsh lines to soften them.

2 Raised eyebrows

The eyebrows are rounded into an arch, and raised as they are pulled up the forehead. This opens up space around the eye and flattens out creases, as the skin is drawn tighter over the eye socket beneath.

5 Wide eyes

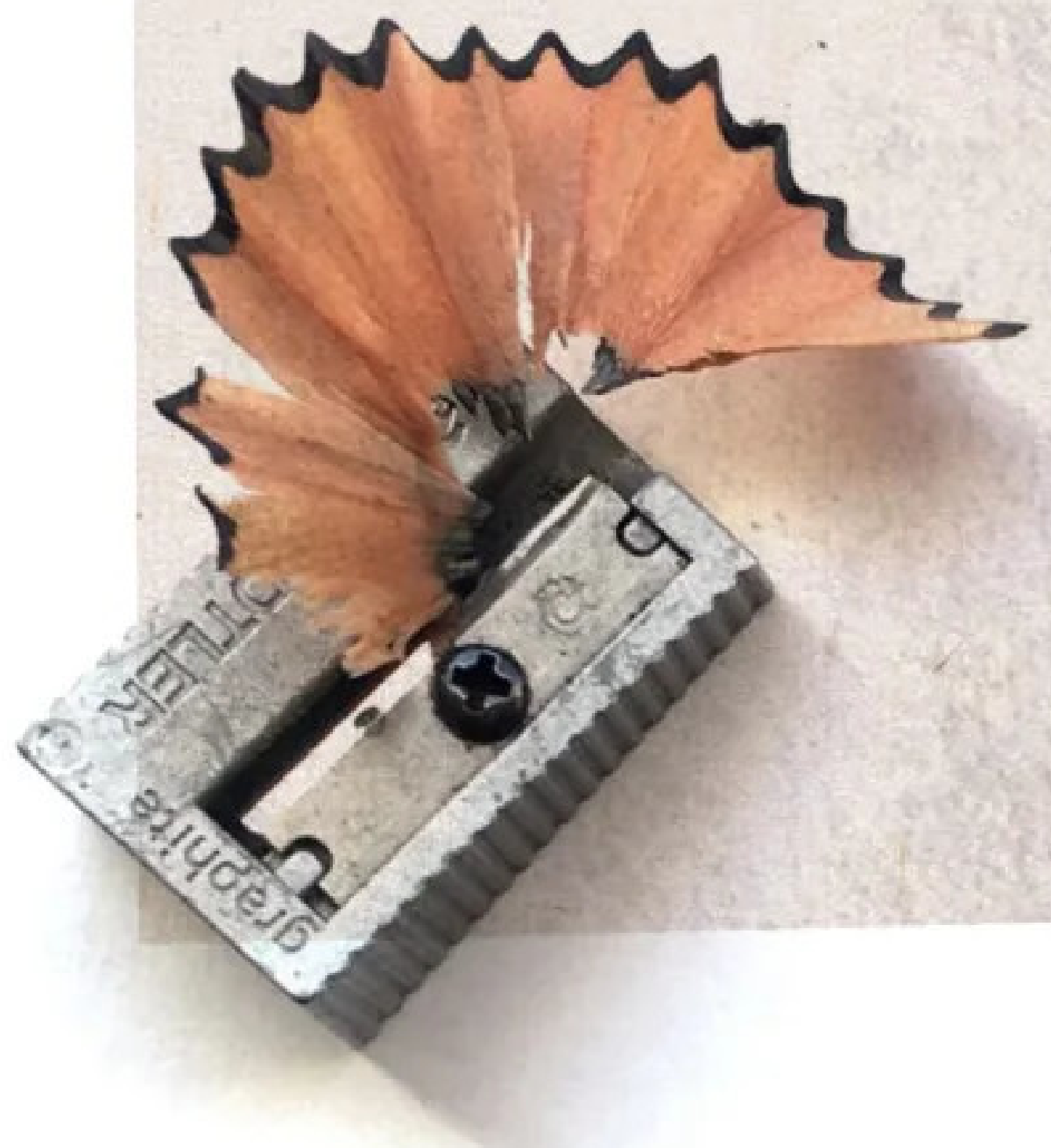
The eyes widen more than in any other expression. The upper lid opens and the lower lid relaxes, so we see a lot more of the iris. In extreme cases, we will see more of the whites of the eyes.

3 Jaw relaxes

The jaw muscles relax in surprised expressions, often accompanying an intake of breath, to create a slack-jawed appearance. Keep in mind how this elongates the overall shape of the face.

4 Mouth loosens

Here we can see the mouth is fairly slack, and is mostly affected by gravity. The muscles are not pulling it in any particular direction. Sometimes surprise causes the mouth to contract into a tight 'O' shape.



Surprise

Surprise tends to be seen less than other expressions and we only see it very briefly. It is more frequently found when acted on film, and of course, in a well-timed photo. However, it is very easy to recognise, as it tends to pull the features in a dramatic way. Here we are looking at a fairly neutral surprise, but more often than not, we see surprise combining with other expressions.

The eyes and the mouth do all the work here, both rounding out in 'O' shapes. The eyes and eyebrows dramatically widen and open out, while the mouth slackens.

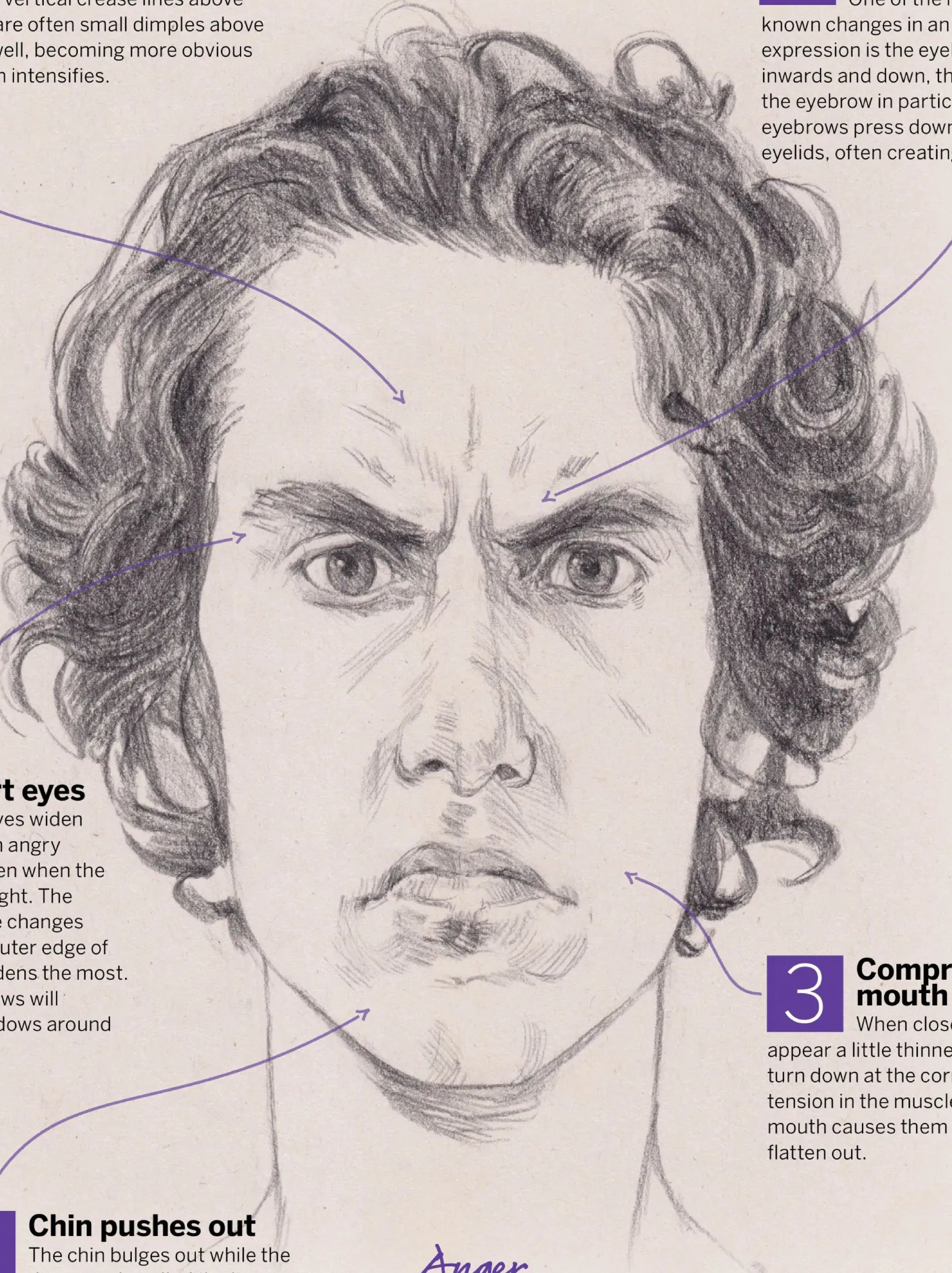
The sketch

1 Wrinkles around the eyebrows

As the eyebrows pinch inwards, they create clear vertical crease lines above the nose. There are often small dimples above the eyebrow as well, becoming more obvious as the expression intensifies.

2 Eyebrows turn down

One of the most well-known changes in an angry expression is the eyebrow pointing inwards and down, the inner part of the eyebrow in particular. The eyebrows press down on the eyelids, often creating a little fold.



5 Alert eyes

The eyes widen a bit in angry expressions, even when the expression is slight. The shape of the eye changes slightly, as the outer edge of the upper lid widens the most. Lowered eyebrows will deepen the shadows around the eyes.

3 Compressed mouth

When closed, the lips appear a little thinner, and may turn down at the corners. The tension in the muscles around the mouth causes them to start to flatten out.

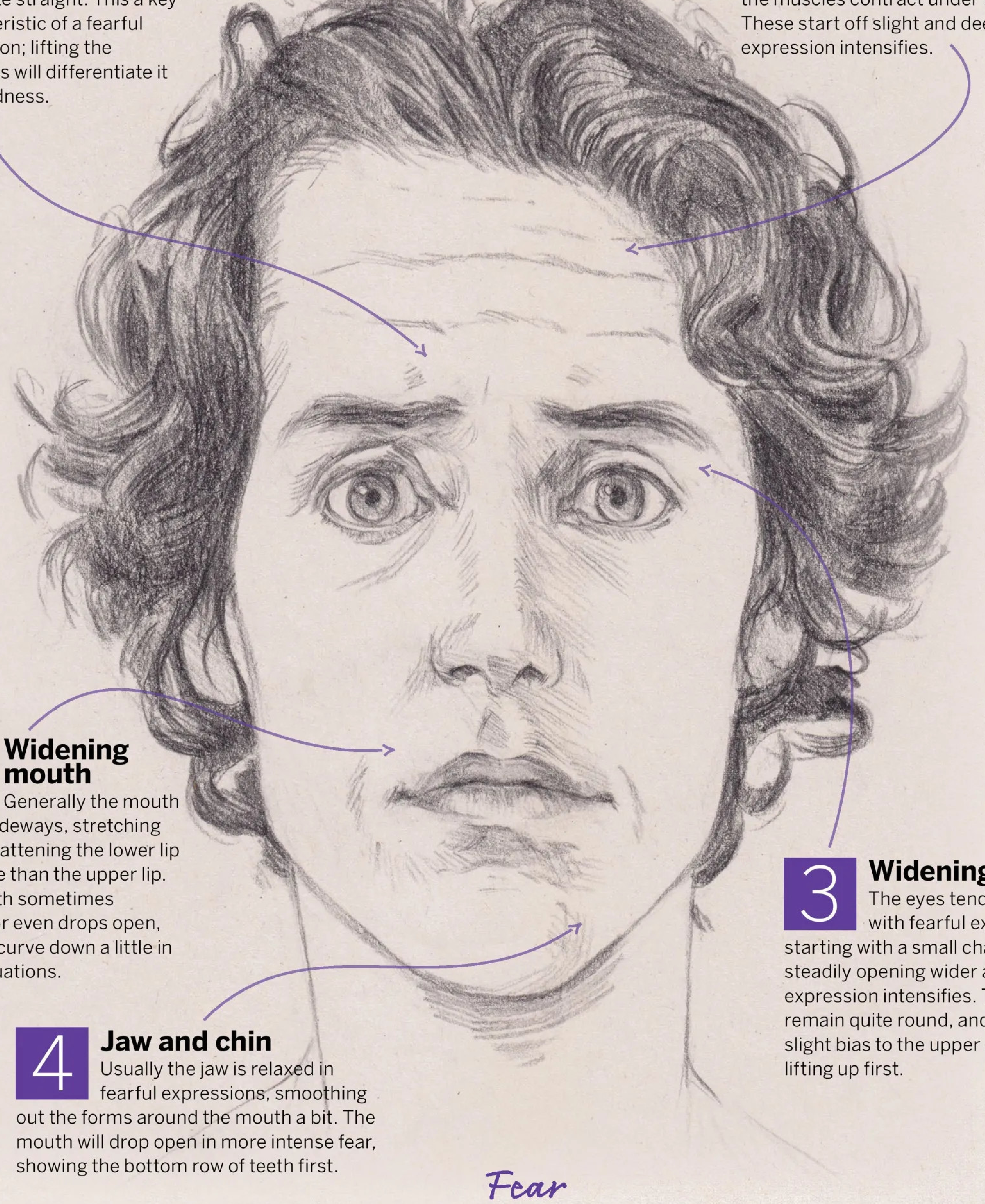
4 Chin pushes out

The chin bulges out while the downwards pull of the lips deepens the curve between the lower lip and chin, creating a shadow. These changes are often quite small, but help with expressing the lips.

Anger

Anger is both a difficult expression to draw, and to act out. While it is easy to recognise in more dramatic forms, with the eyebrows deeply furrowing and the mouth open to shout, as a passing expression it is less obvious.

A constant in this expression is the furrowing eyebrows, especially once the frown deepens enough to press against the upper eyelid. It also causes the muscles of the face to become more strained, creating tight lips and glaring eyes. Typically the mouth only opens when someone is shouting, or if the expression is very extreme. Mild versions of this expression tend to relax the mouth before the eyes.



1 Eyebrows turn up

Here the eyebrows lift up and squeeze inwards. In particular, they lift in the middle, but otherwise stay quite straight. This a key characteristic of a fearful expression; lifting the eyebrows will differentiate it from sadness.

2 Forehead creases

The lifting of the eyebrows causes the forehead to wrinkle up with horizontal creases as the muscles contract under the skin. These start off slight and deepen as the expression intensifies.

3 Widening eyes

The eyes tend to widen with fearful expressions, starting with a small change and steadily opening wider as the expression intensifies. They remain quite round, and there is a slight bias to the upper eyelid lifting up first.

4 Jaw and chin

Usually the jaw is relaxed in fearful expressions, smoothing out the forms around the mouth a bit. The mouth will drop open in more intense fear, showing the bottom row of teeth first.

5 Widening mouth

Generally the mouth widens sideways, stretching out and flattening the lower lip a bit more than the upper lip. The mouth sometimes relaxes, or even drops open, or might curve down a little in some situations.

Fear

There are many variations on fearful expressions, as fear can encompass anything from worry to screaming terror. What is consistent here is the eyes and eyebrows, their action stays the same and only varies in intensity. The eyebrows pinch together and lift in the centre, while the eyes start to widen, although not as much as in a surprised expression. It is essential to get these two features correct. The mouth may do a few different things – the lips can compress and narrow in more anxious expressions, widen sideways and flatten out in mild fear, or open when someone shouts or gasps, the lower lip stretching wider.

Get hands on

Hands are almost as important as the face in showing emotion. Having them interact with the face can be a great addition to an expressive portrait. Some emotions read much better with hands, such as thoughtfulness, horror and exasperation, because we associate those emotions with specific poses.

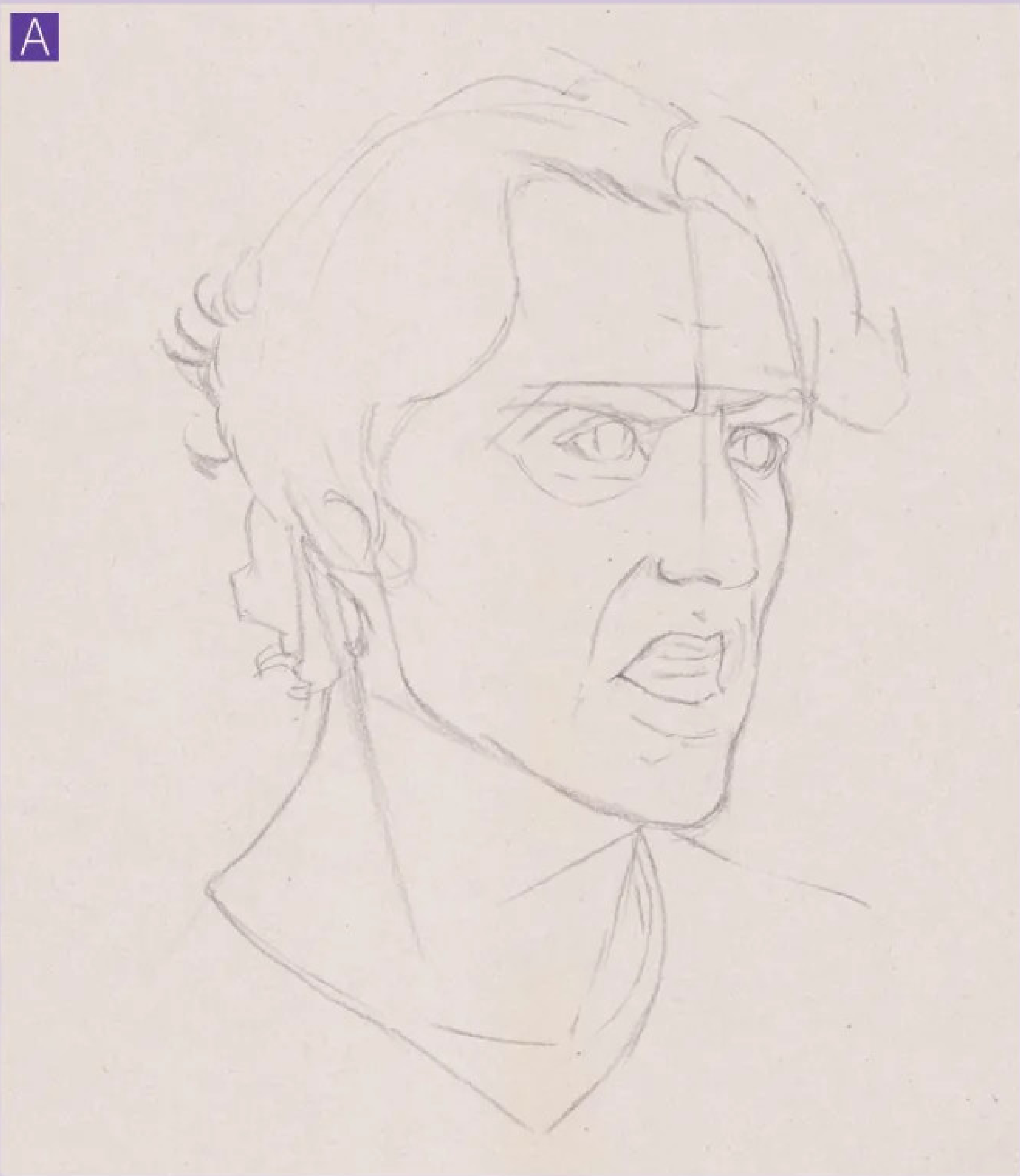
Drawing an expressive portrait

Here we work through drawing the face in a strong expression, looking at indicating the expression early on in the drawing and applying it to the features

A Applying the gesture of an expression

We start by laying in the overall structure of the head. Expressive faces need to be indicated early on, as expression changes the whole portrait. Here I am indicating the placement of the features, taking special care to allow extra space for the lowered jaw. The creases around the nose have been extended to link up with the forms of the mouth, and I have drawn an arc around the eye to track the flattening of the cheek. It is important to pay attention to how features are connected at this stage.

A



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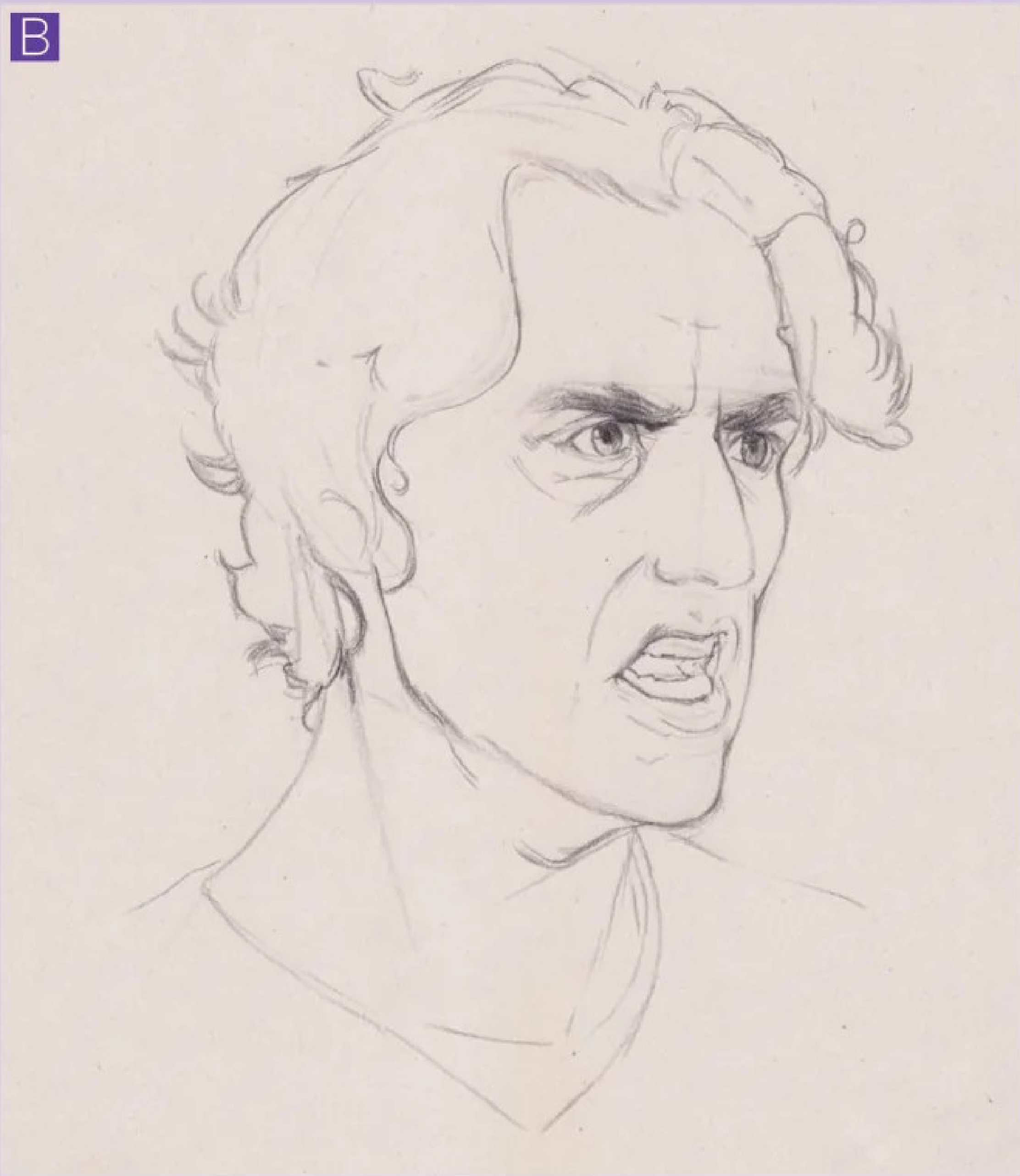
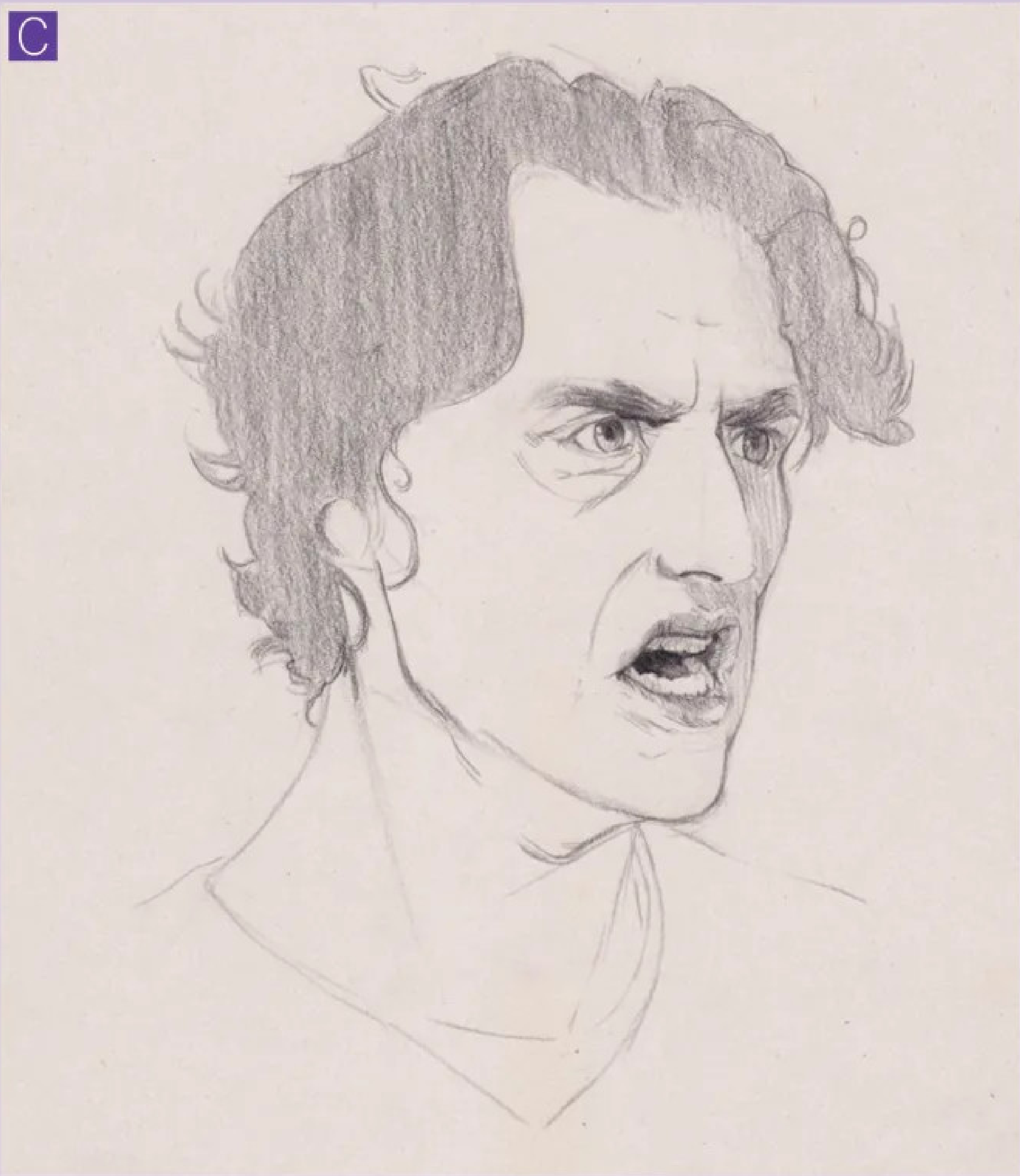


B Shaping the features

Here I am working on getting all the major shapes locked down. This uses the initial sketch as a scaffold and works on top. When drawing the eyes, look for the shapes between the eyelid and eyebrow, and the whites of the eyes. As the shape of the face gets tightened up, I look at how the chin, mouth and cheek overlap each other, and the angle they make with the eye and tip of the nose. To get the mouth shape, I checked the shapes of the teeth against the inside of the mouth, and then worked out to the lips.

C



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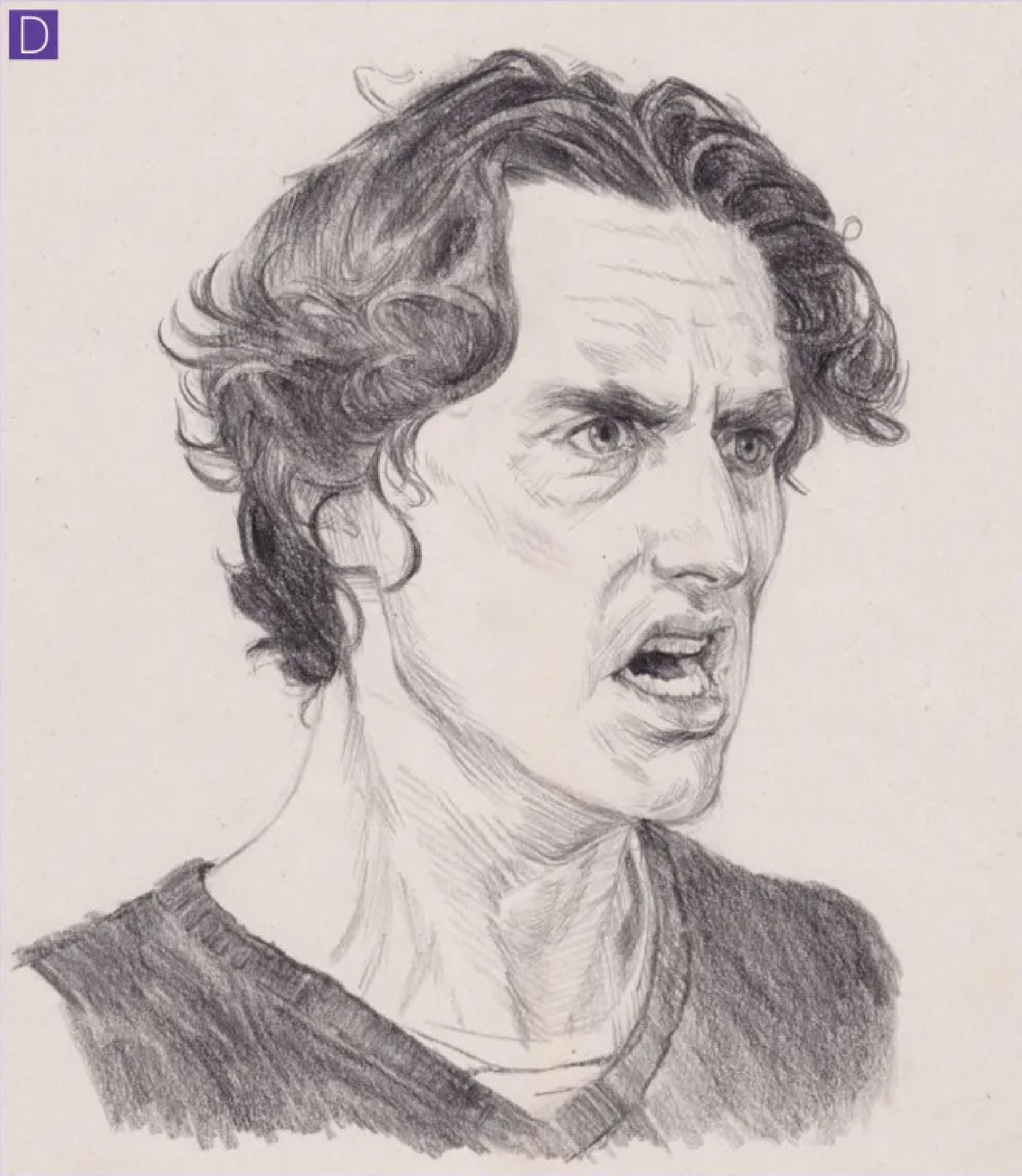


C Drawing an open mouth

Open mouths can be a challenge for a lot of artists. First off, take care with the teeth; try to start by combining them into a single shape, and add your tone as such – they often have shadows on them as they are inside the mouth. With the lips, pay very close attention to how they wrap around the teeth, and how the near side of the lips overlap the opposite side. If you look at the corners of the lips, you can see that the upper lip slots on top of the lower lip, creating a tiny overlap.

D Creases and final details

In this section, I have added a lot of the surface details to the face that push the expression and help interconnect the features. As this is an angry expression, the forehead creases, creases below the eye, and the forms of the mouth and chin are of particular interest. Note how most of these are described with light hatching; it is important not to overdo it!

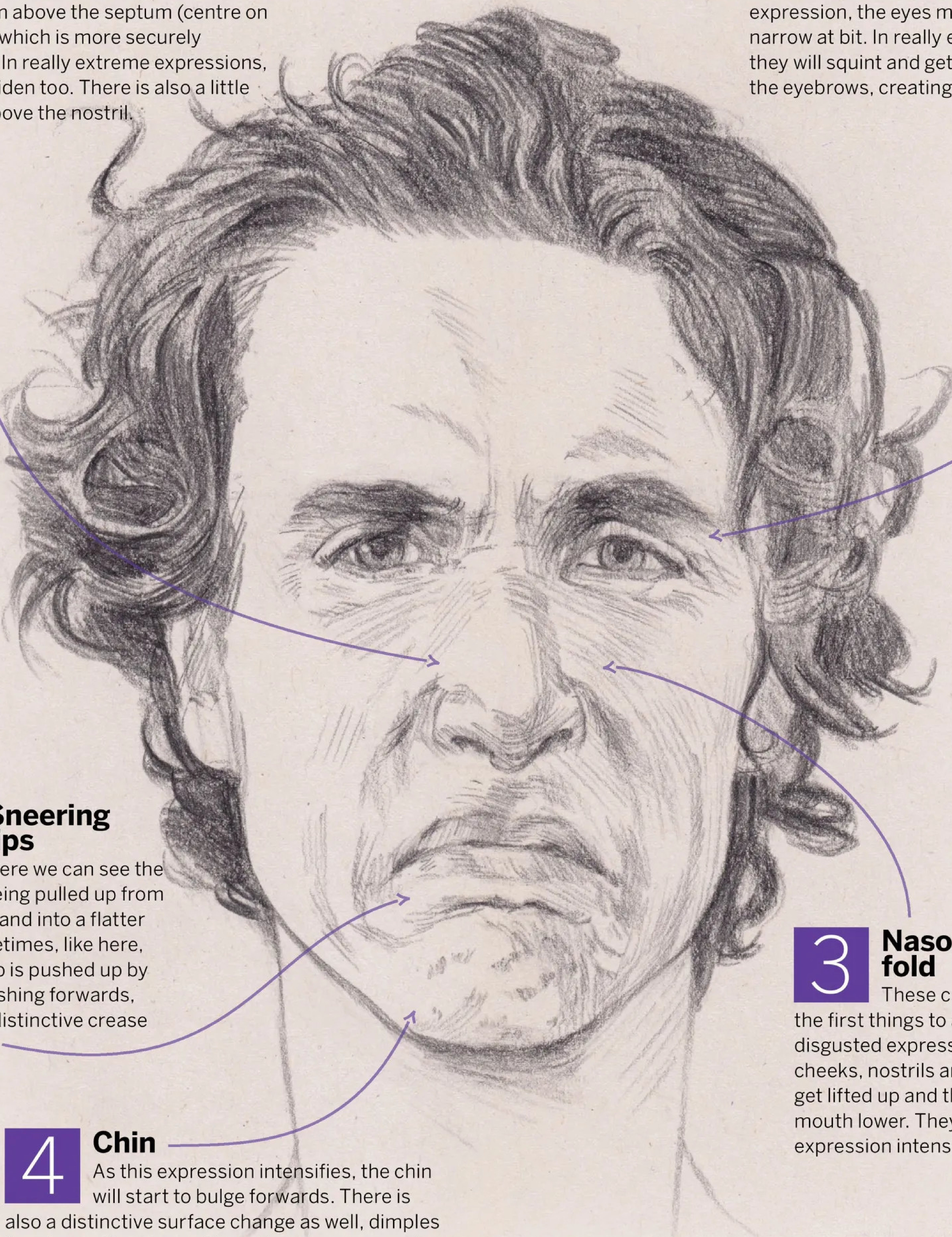
> "With the lips, pay very close attention to how they wrap around the teeth"

1 Raised nostrils

The nostrils get raised in this expression, tilting them up and lifting them above the septum (centre on the nose), which is more securely anchored. In really extreme expressions, they will widen too. There is also a little shadow above the nostril.

2 Narrowed eyes

Though not an essential element of a disgusted expression, the eyes may start to narrow at bit. In really extreme disgust, they will squint and get compressed by the eyebrows, creating lots of creases.



5 Sneering lips

Here we can see the upper lip being pulled up from the centre, and into a flatter form. Sometimes, like here, the lower lip is pushed up by the chin pushing forwards, creating a distinctive crease beneath it.

3 Nasolabial fold

These creases are one of the first things to appear in a disgusted expression, as the cheeks, nostrils and upper lip all get lifted up and the corners of the mouth lower. They deepen as the expression intensifies.

4 Chin

As this expression intensifies, the chin will start to bulge forwards. There is also a distinctive surface change as well, dimples forming as the mass of the chin is compressed by muscles pulling it to the lower lip.

Disgust

Disgust is an expression that very actively animates the face, affecting the nose as well as the eyes and mouth as everything starts to scrunch up. Much of our perception of a disgusted expression comes from the nasolabial folds – also called 'laugh lines' – creasing and the lifting of the lower lip.

The face will often slightly turn away, or the eyes avert with this expression. In milder forms, such as contempt, the eyes and face tend to relax first, the nose acts less, and we are left with the characteristic action of the lips.

Negative shapes

Look for negative shapes between features, creases, and in gaps, such as the whites of the eye. These make it easier to see the small changes in between different expressions, and can help us draw more accurately. This will also help you capture a sitter's likeness.

Drawing different types of hair

Lancelot Richardson shows how to draw hair in simple stages, and shares examples for drawing different types of hair

About LANCELOT

Brighton, UK

Lancelot Richardson is a painter and freelance illustrator. He also works at independent drawing school Draw Brighton as a life drawing tutor. Alongside life drawing, he also teaches imaginative drawing techniques there.

www.lancelotrichardson.com

Materials

- ☐ Selection of Mars Lumograph pencils between HB to 8B
- ☐ Kneaded eraser
- ☐ Electric eraser
- ☐ Single-edge razor blades
- ☐ Seawhite A4 Cartridge paper, 220 GSM

Hair can be a daunting prospect when drawing a portrait, as we need to deal with the perceived detail and complexity. We are going to look at the process of drawing hair, as well as a few examples of the challenges presented by different kinds of hair.

When drawing hair, the detail of many strands of hair can seem overwhelming, and we may attempt to draw them, creating a bit of a mess. We cannot see most hairs individually, and will only be able to identify a few loose ones on the edge of the main shape, or that catch highlights. If we cannot see them, we need not draw them! Instead we should look at the shapes formed by the hair, as it tends to clump together in locks. Try to identify bigger sections early on by looking for lines of shadow that separate them into larger masses. Finding shadow shapes helps create a unified look as well.

Another challenge is texture. Hair is incredibly diverse, so no single drawing approach will fit all types. Think about the marks you use – how do they follow the direction or the hair? Usually it is better to leave texture to the later stages of a drawing, but be mindful that the marks you make to describe it will make things darker, so don't make the hair too dark in the early stages.

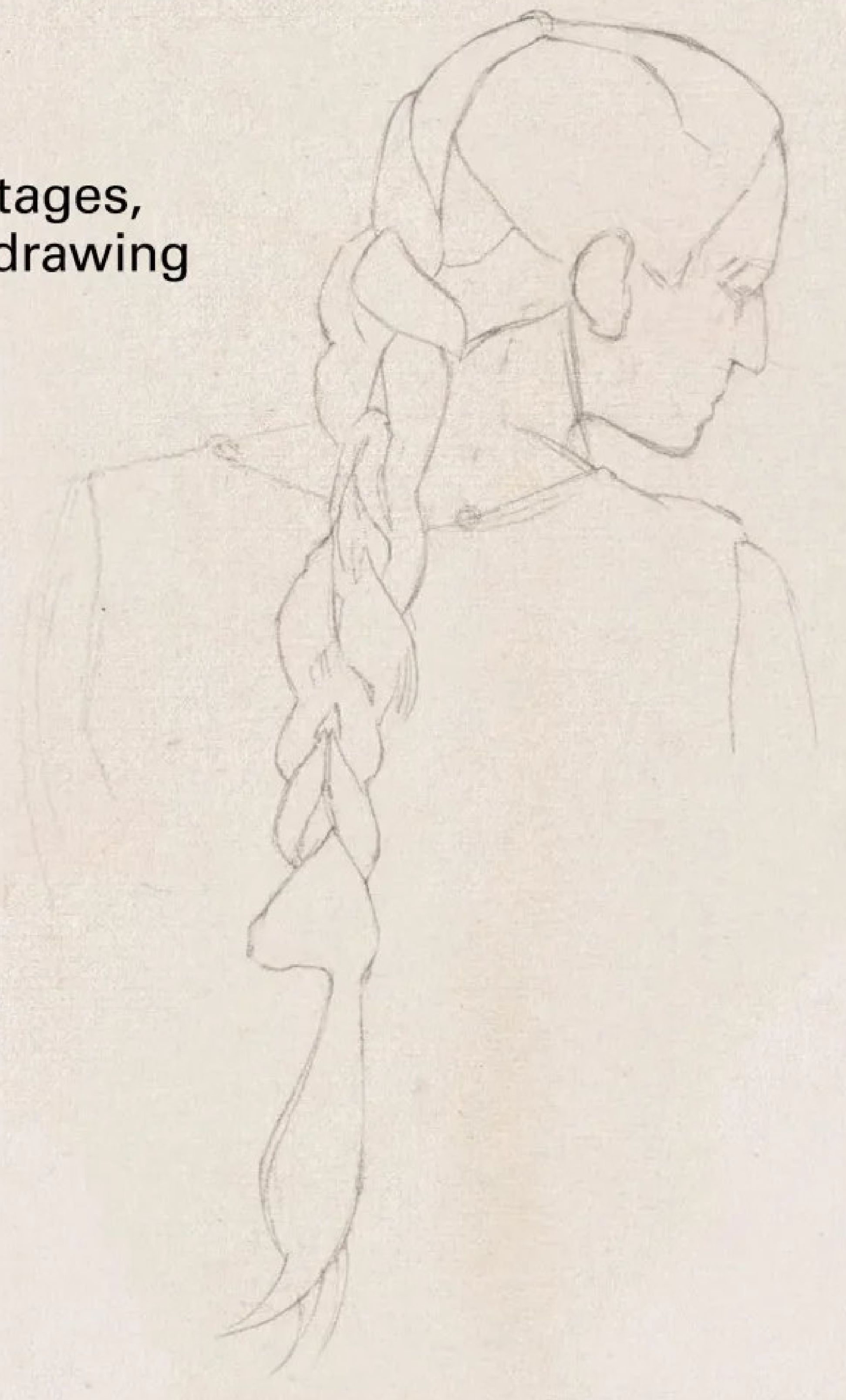
It is also good to be aware of the forces acting on hair. It has no muscles, so is entirely affected by gravity and other external support, such as being tied up. Only when hair is very frizzy does it start to become more self-supporting. Therefore, the volume of hair will be pulled down – or into a hair tie – and wrap around the round form of the head.

Drawing hair

By working through our drawing in stages, we can break down the challenge of drawing a complex hairstyle

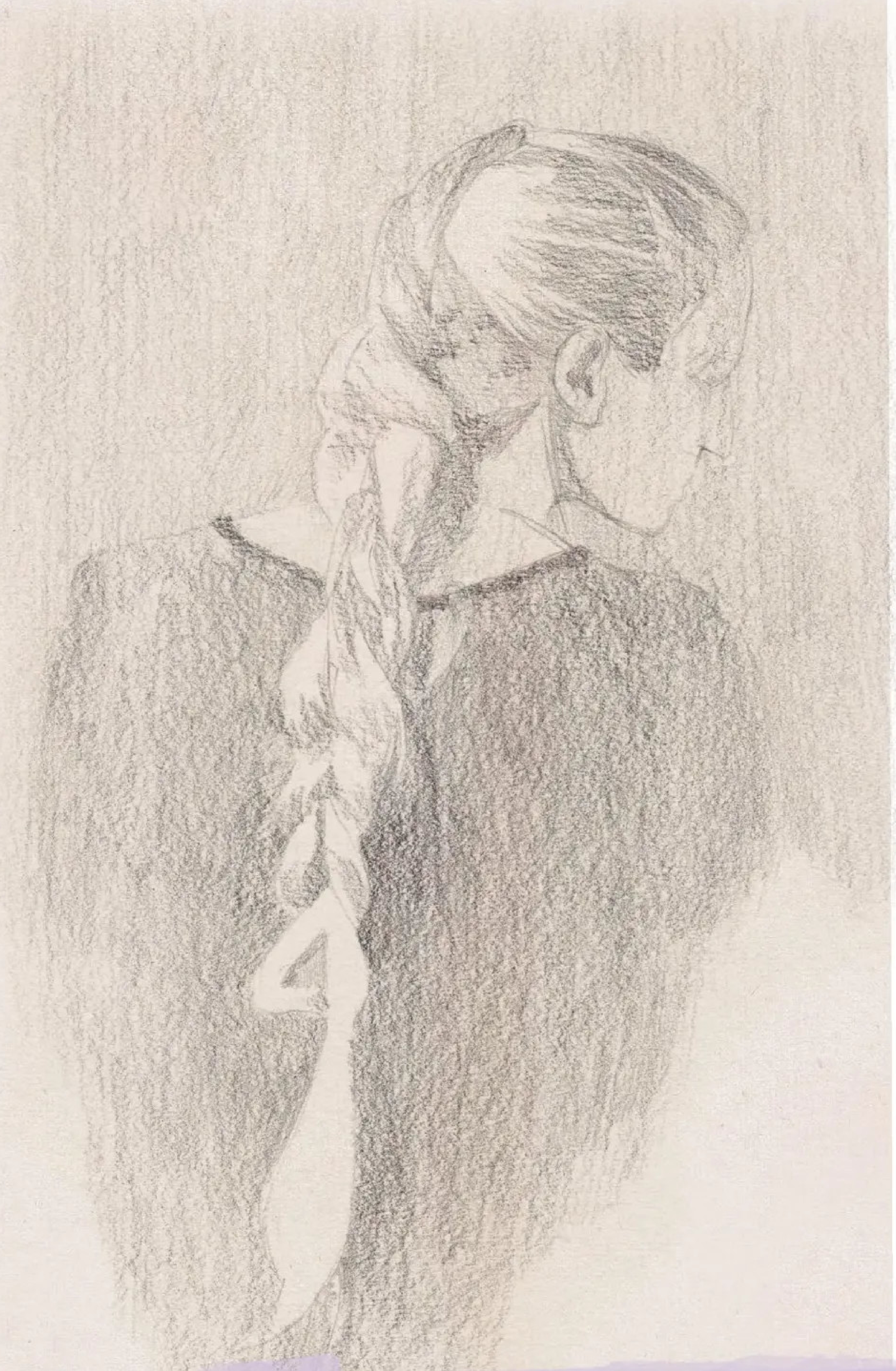
1 Finding the shape

A good, clear initial sketch is very important when it comes to tackling a complex subject like this braid. To start with, I blocked out the entire shape of the hair, and then broke the braid down into visible segments. This will help maintain the idea that the individual locks making up the braid are continuous lengths of hair, as well as protect the rhythm of the braid. In a few places, I have indicated shadow shapes in the braid. The locks of hair wrapping the scalp have also been marked out. It is good to think of hair as forming clumps with volume rather than strands.



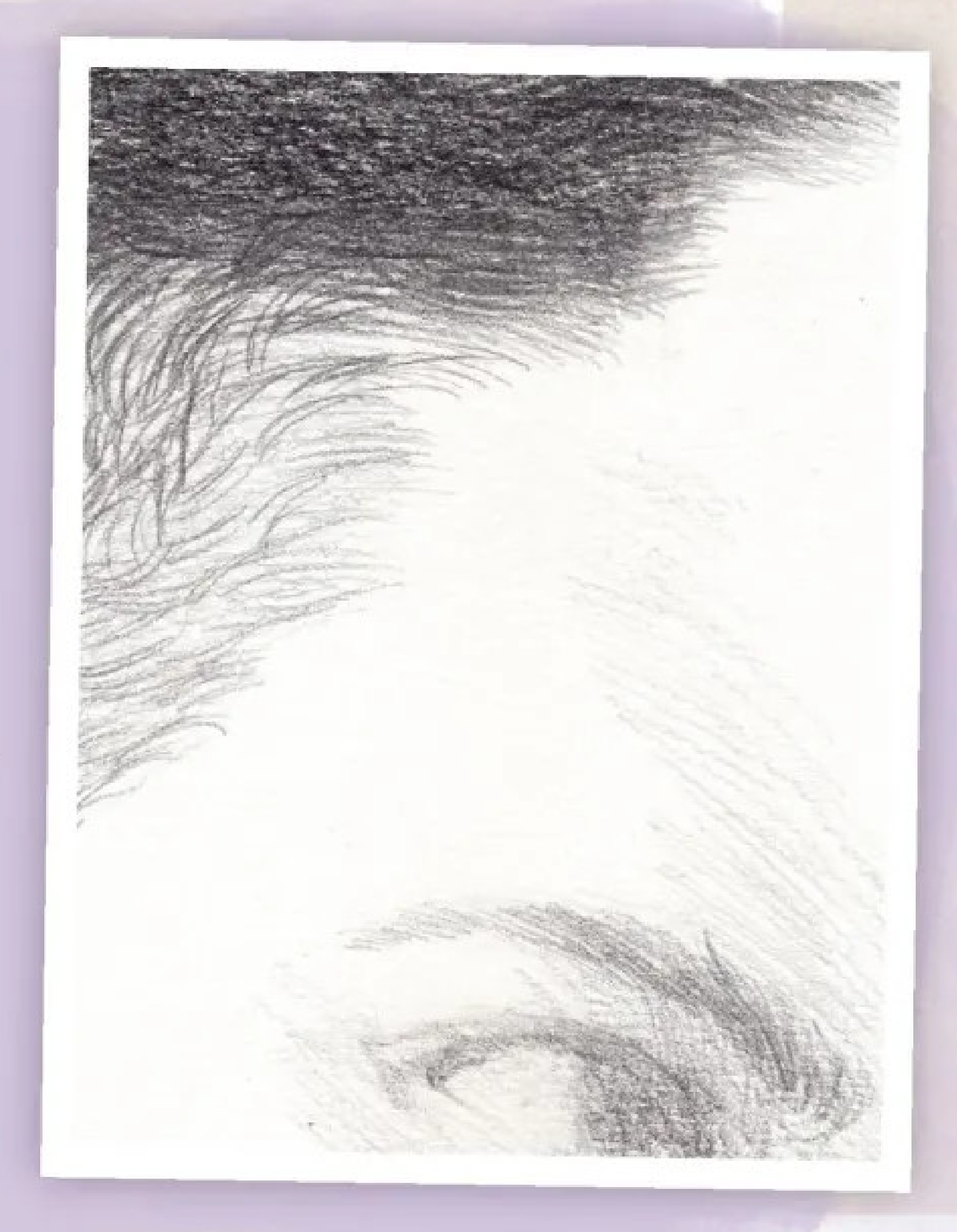
2 Local and background tones

Here we start with large tonal shapes, so later we can work down to smaller details. With hair, layering tone is an effective way to attain the contrast we need. The hair is very light and well lit from the braid side, so the lightest areas have been left white. It is important to include some background tone, as it helps the highlights to stand out. Later on we will contrast it to the shadow on the face, for compositional interest. The hair gets lighter toward the bottom of the braid, and is framed by the darker mid tone of the top.



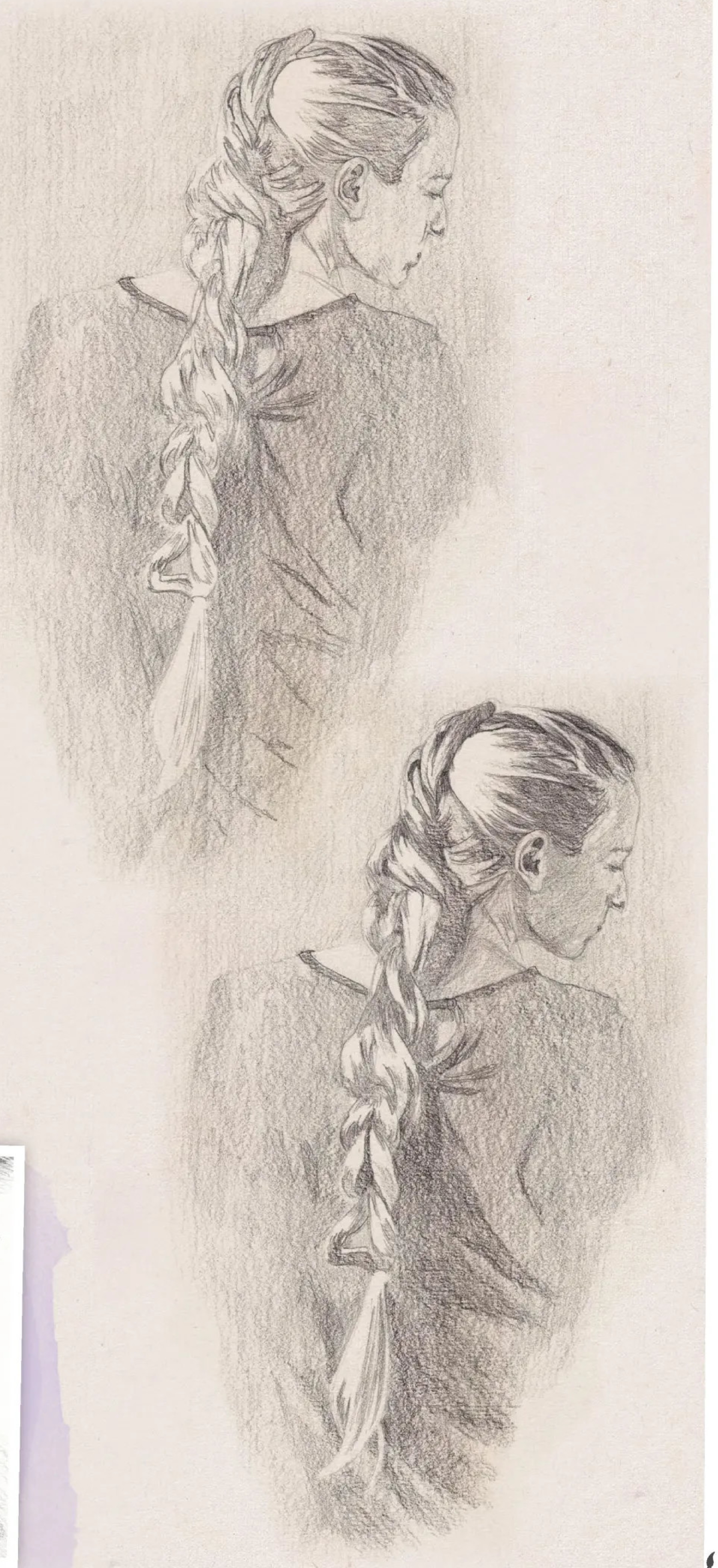
Transition of hairlines

Hairlines create a soft transition to the skin, so avoid drawing a hard line here. Instead render this transition as a gradient. By following the direction of the hair with your marks, you indicate texture, density and direction of growth – or the volume of the head if the hair is pulled back.



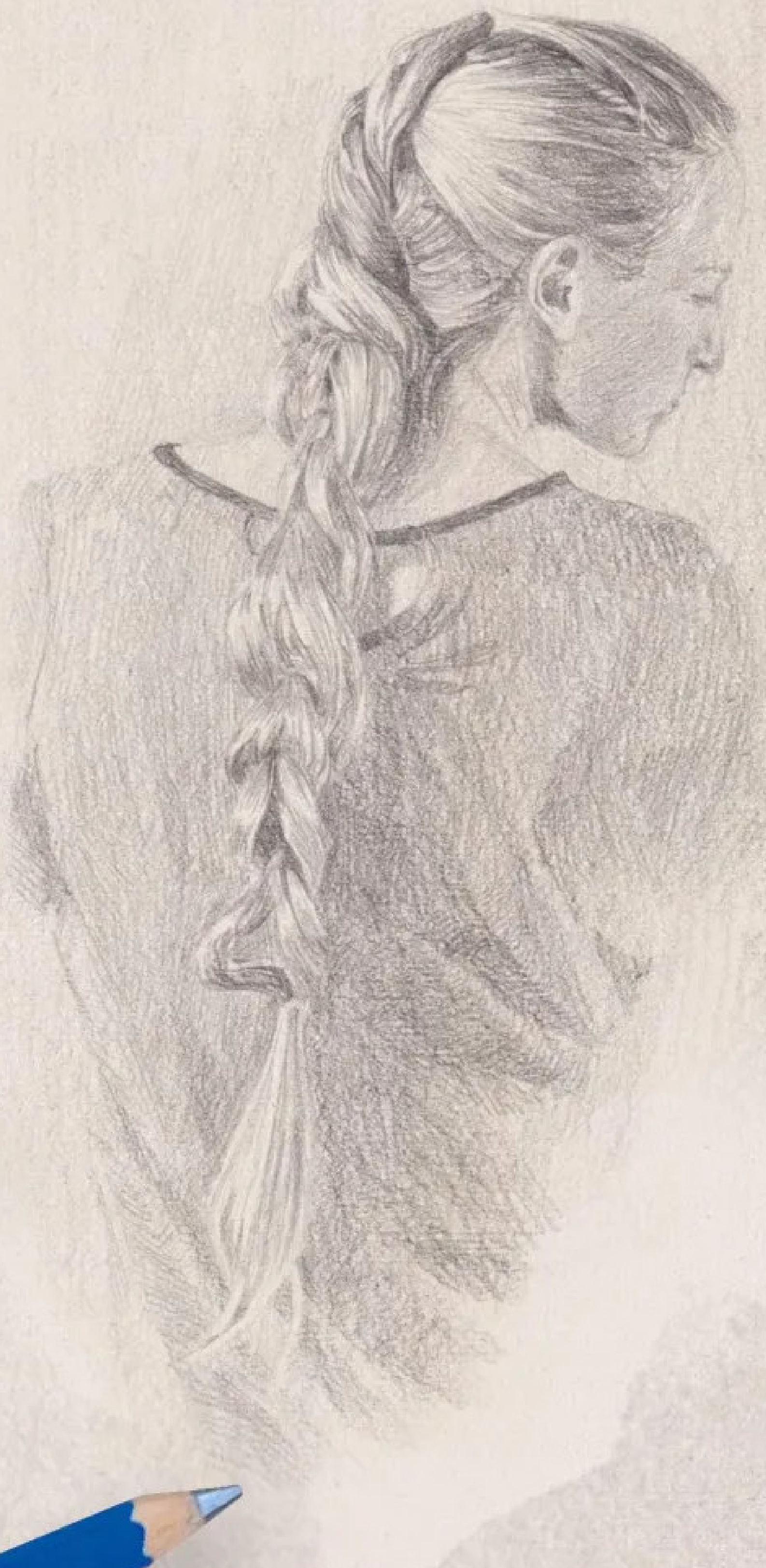
3 Placing shadow shapes

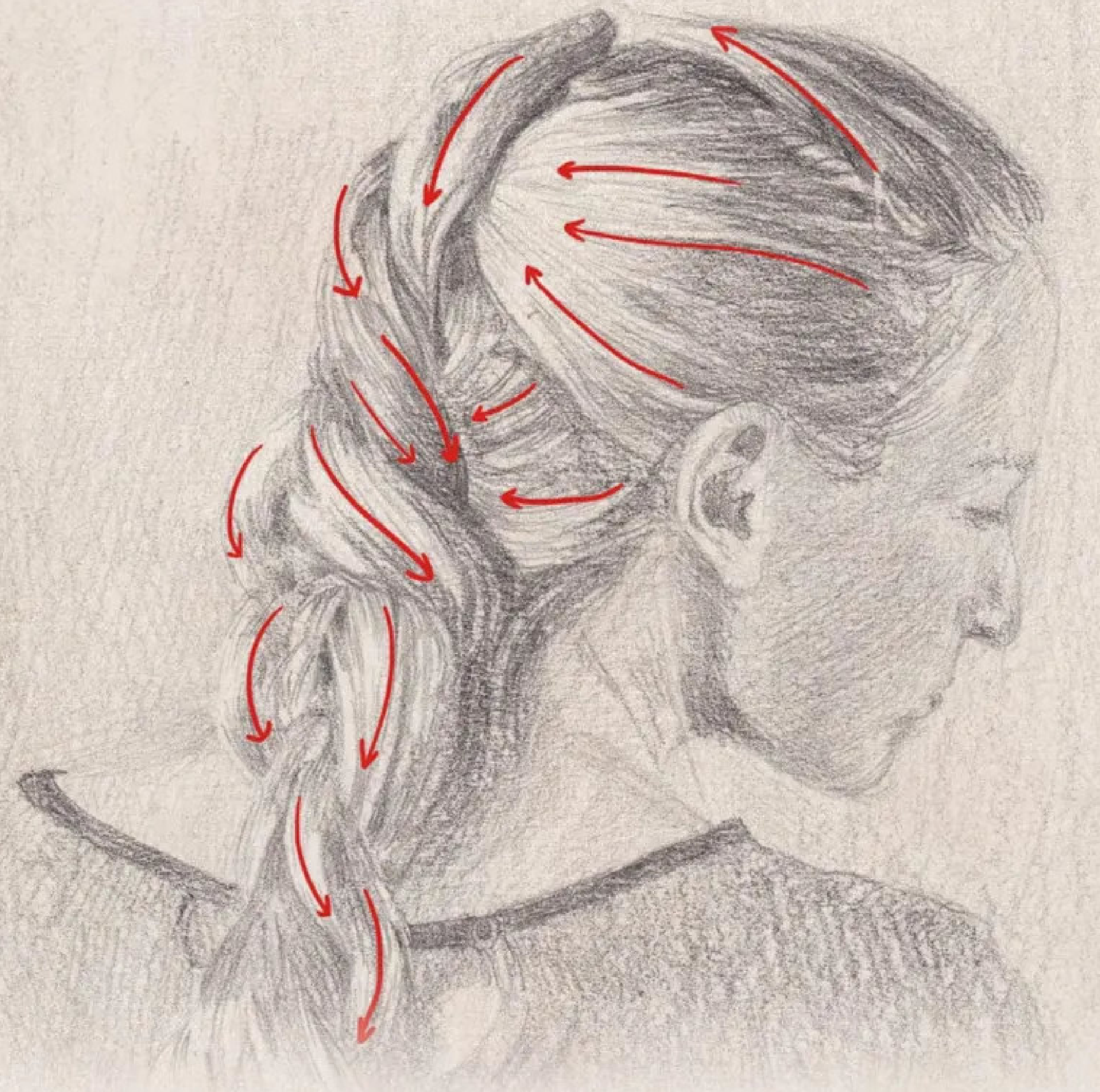
The line drawing shows the shape of the shadows before they are blocked in with a flat layer of darker tone. Rather than scribbling lots of lines for the strands of hair, it shows the collective behaviour with how the clumps of hair form shadows due to their volumes. Where possible, try to link up the shadow shapes into larger ones; this helps us attain a unified, clearer look, and is more true to how we observe complex subjects. The direction of the hair is starting to be implied by the feathering on the edge of the shadows.



4 Texture and direction

This is where we get to introduce the details the eye craves! As this hair is straight, the texture largely follows the direction of the hair. It is formed by lines wrapping around the top and back of the head as hair is pulled into the braid. Then the individual segments of the braid have lines that follow the flow and twist of the hair. This is not the same as drawing individual strands; we want to think of the overall behaviour of locks of hair and use our marks to describe their direction.



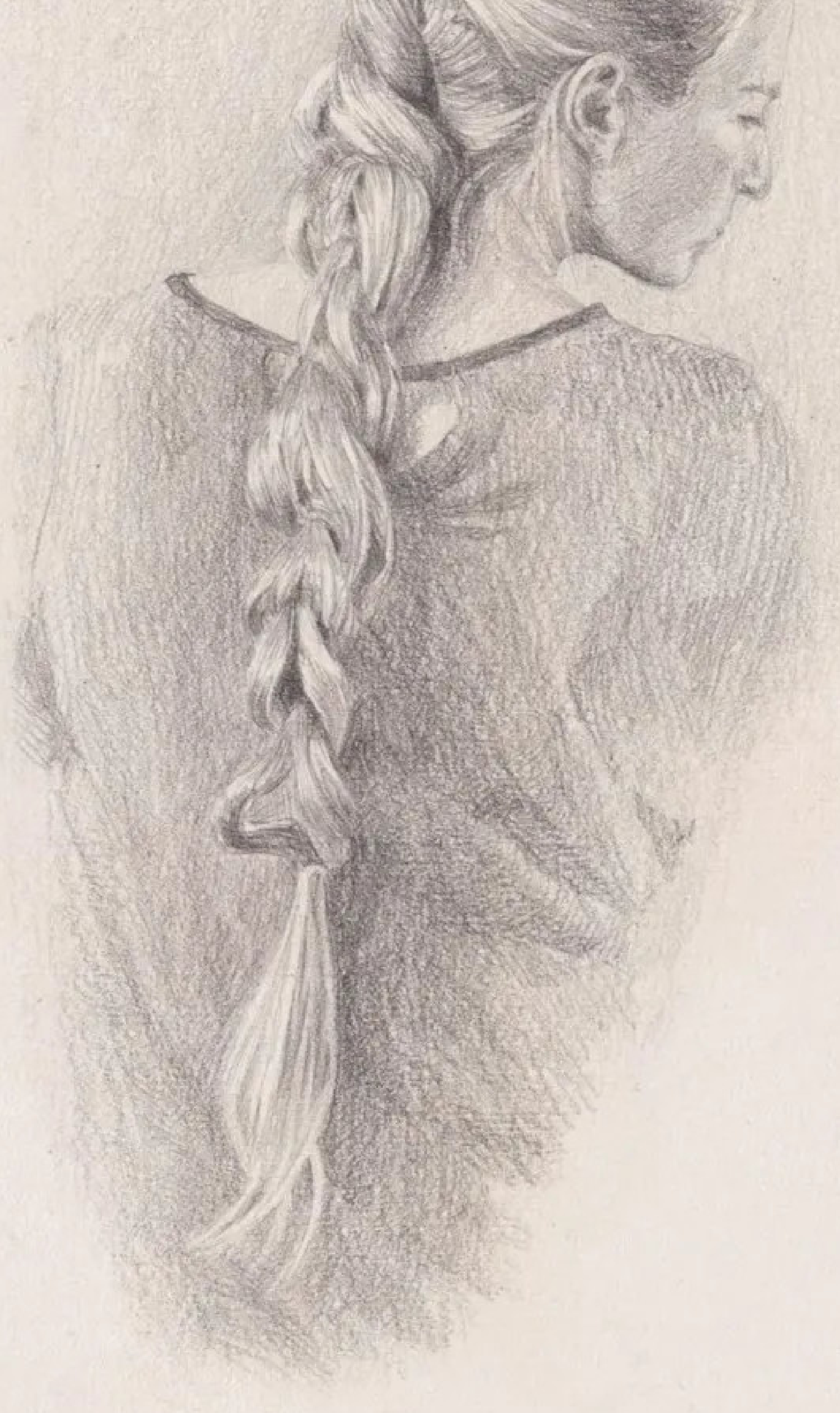


Skin tone versus hair tone

In most cases we encounter, the hair has a darker tone than skin, even for sitters who have darker skin. Exceptions occur when hair goes white due to age, or when it is bleached. Only the lightest blond hair is lighter than the skin – usually you will find it is a bit darker.

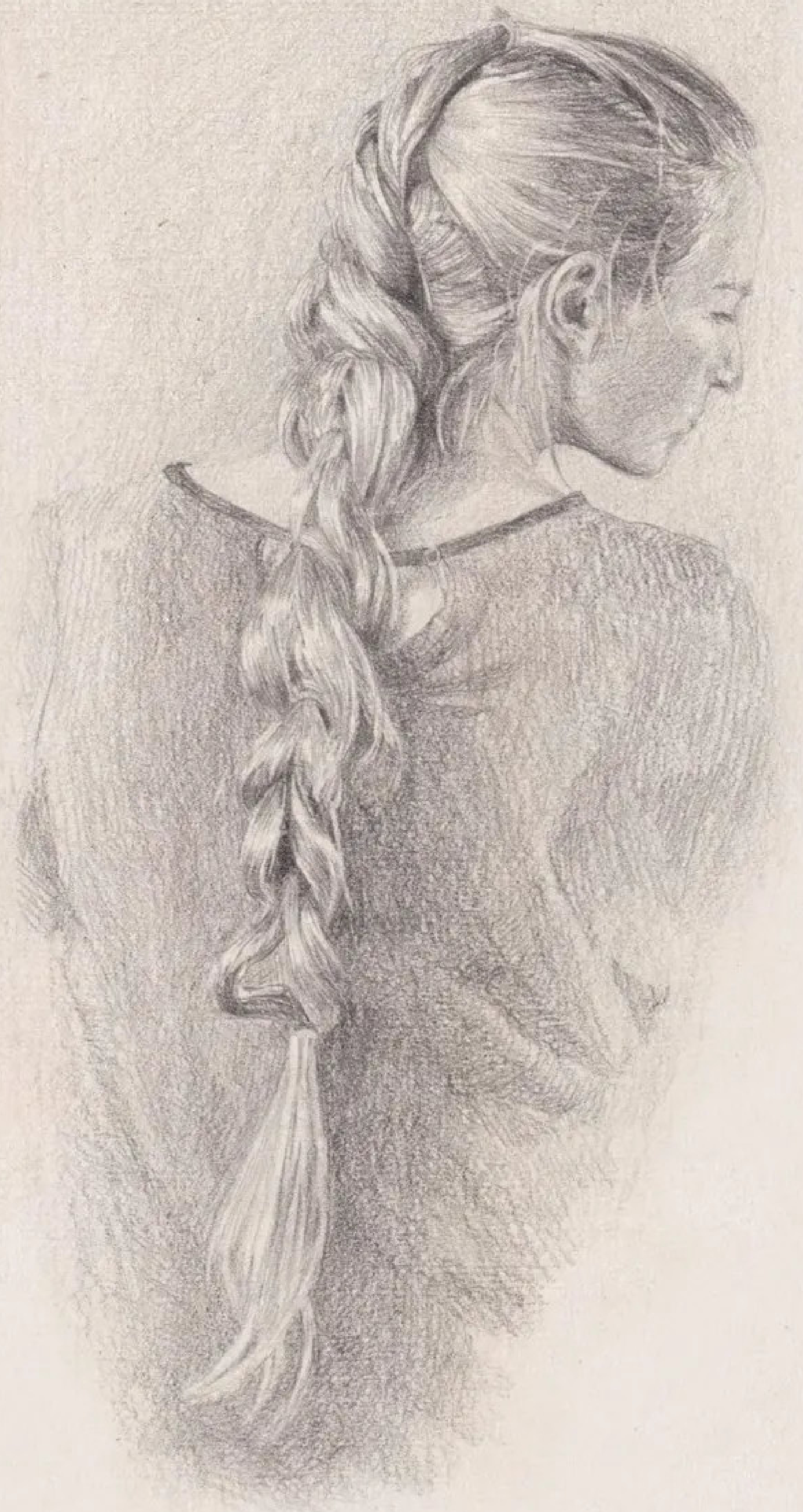
5 Shadows and edges

Adding texture in the last section deepened the shadows, but here we have put in another layer of tone to push the contrast further. In particular, aside from deepening the shadows on the hair, I have ensured that the contrast between the hair and the surroundings has been maintained; if the hair gets darker, the background and the top do too. At this point it is also good to adjust edges and silhouettes. The edges of the braid and ponytail at the bottom have been clarified and sharpened, while those around the head have been softened a little.



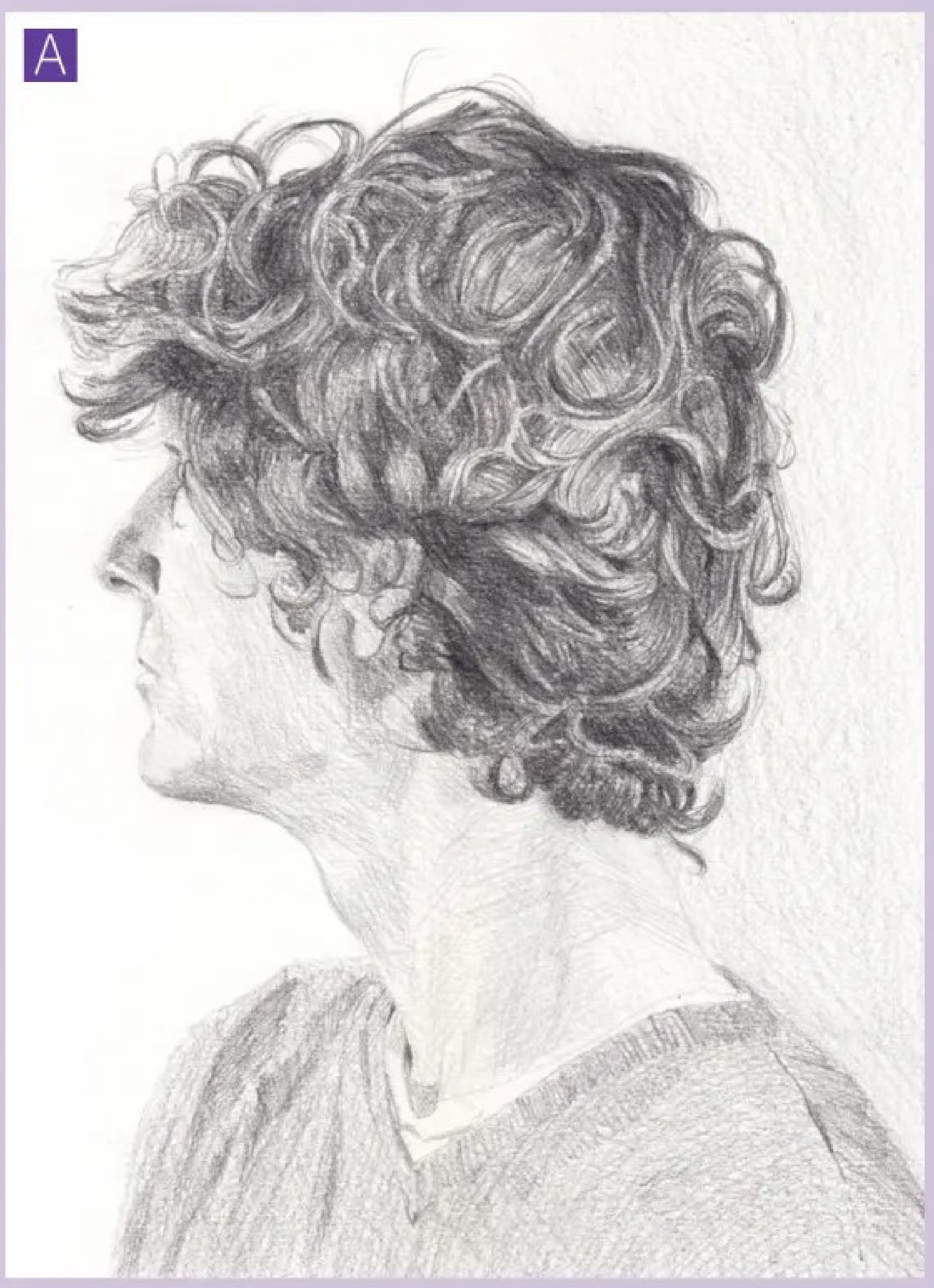
6 Stray hairs and final touches

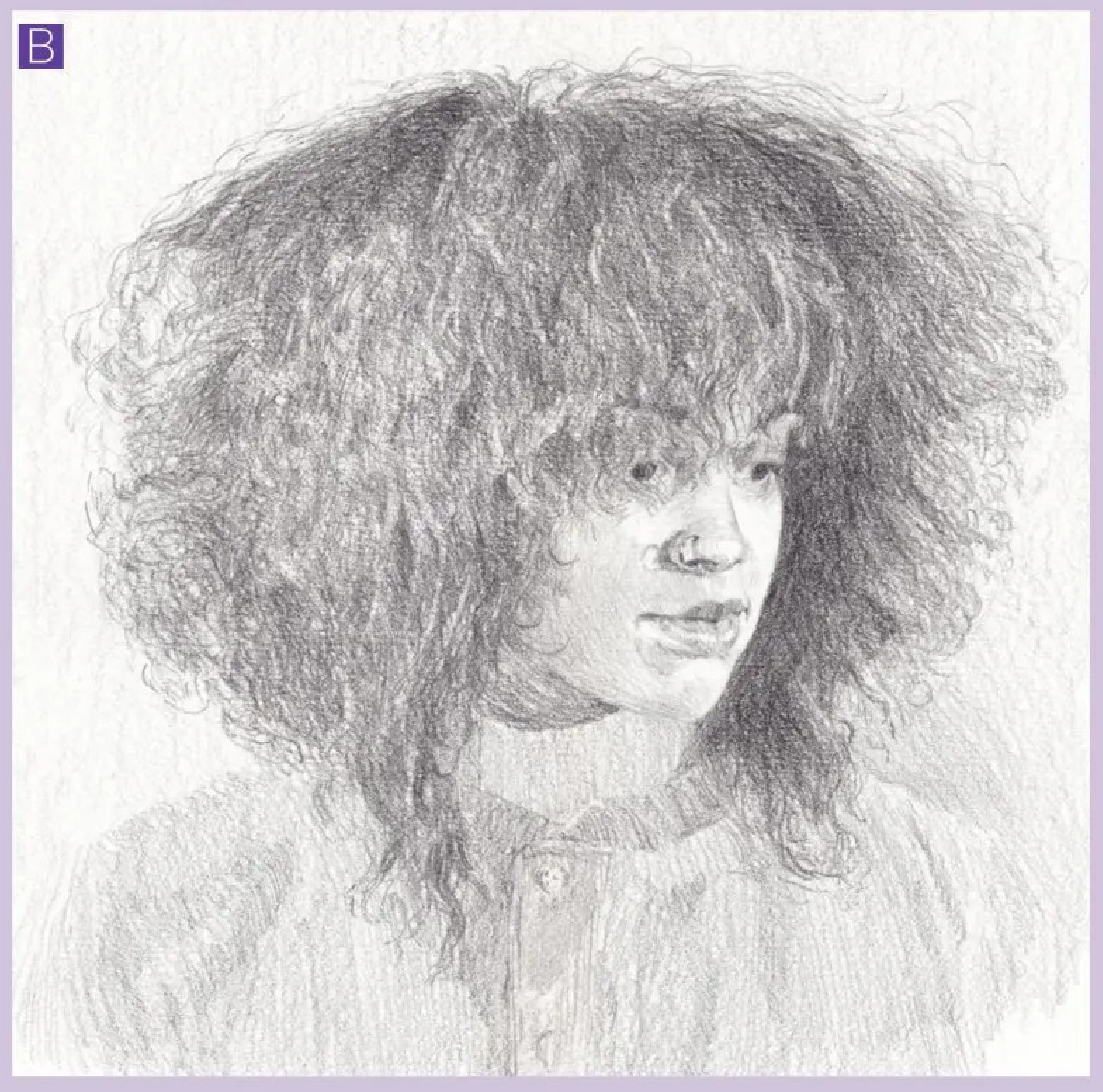
In this final stage, the highlights have been more cleanly resolved, transitioning more smoothly to darker areas – some parts of the braid have been darkened to make the highlights more clear. Some loose strands have also been picked out – you will want to select just enough to describe the softness of the hair, as too many will appear 'busy'. The edges around the ponytail now have a bit more contrast, and have been softened a little as well. At this stage we are finally down to the smallest details.



Describing different hair types

Different hair types present different drawing challenges; here are some key things to look for





A Curly hair

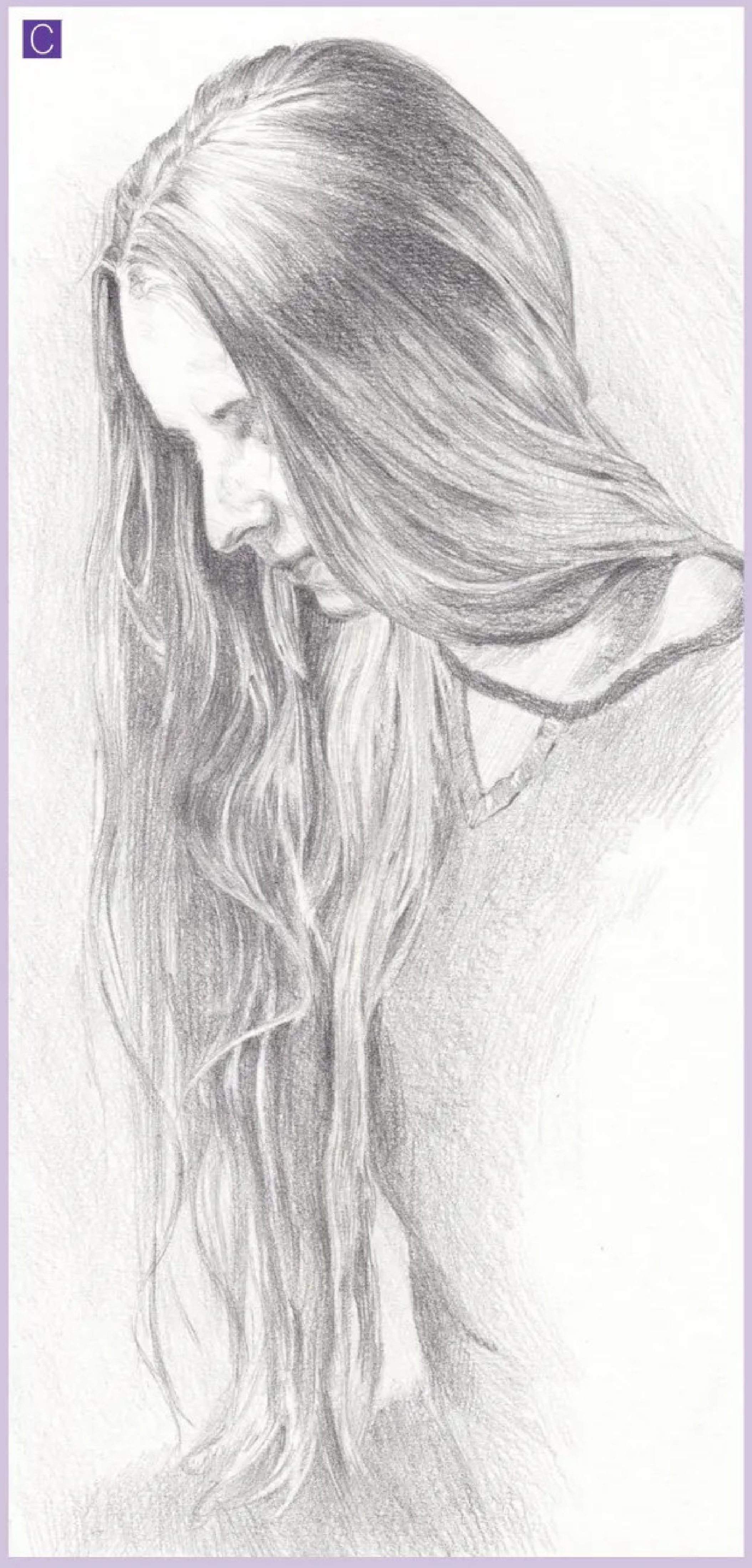
Curly hair is probably the most challenging hair type to draw, having the complexity of frizzier hair but the clumping of straighter hair. First off, you will need to be mindful of the silhouette edges – this will help immensely with portraying the texture. You will also get gaps between locks of hair near the edges as well as little 'points' of locks sticking out at any angle. As you work into the centre, try to make sure that the contrast is not too high, as most of the highlights will not be reflecting white light. Linking up the shadows between the curls will help simplify the hair.

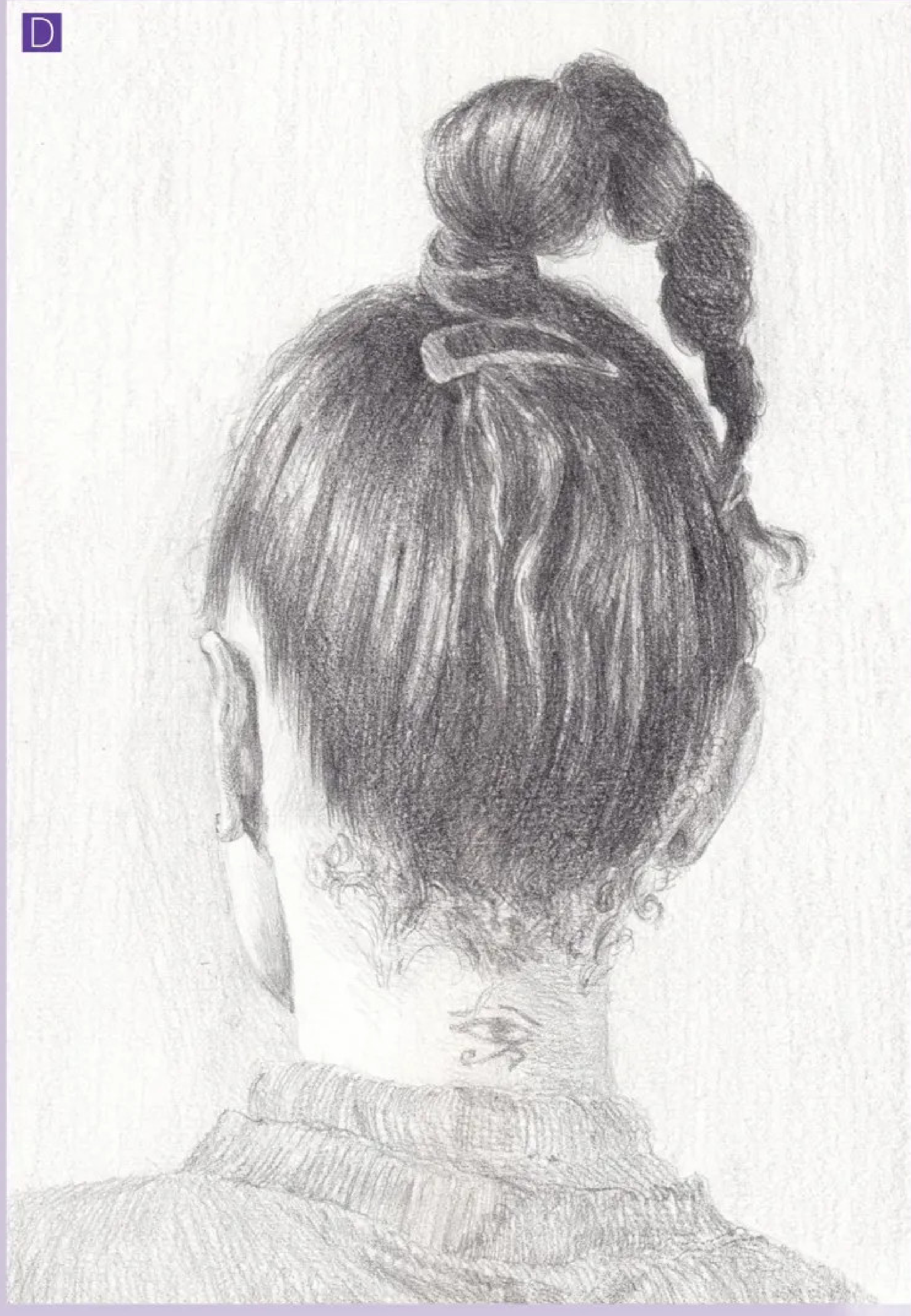
B Kinky hair

Kinky hair tends to be more diffuse, and can have many different textures depending on the person. It is less affected by gravity, so it naturally holds its own shape rather than laying flat on the head – here the hair angles out more to the sides instead of straight down. It also has very soft edges, in this case, a lot of the edges with the surroundings are soft or lost. Like curly hair, most of the texture can be implied by the silhouette, as a lot of stray strands can be seen at the edges.

C Straight hair

When hair is straight, it is strongly affected by gravity. It tends to form into locks, especially near the edges. As you get to the bottom, the density of the hair peters out and you can show more individual strands. Start with the big shapes and slowly break down the locks of hair. Because this hair is being pulled over the head by gravity, it is smooth and shows a direction that curves around the head – by shading with this direction, you can imply that roundness. Always be mindful of the direction you make with your marks.





D Hair tied back

When hair gets tied back, it is pulled taut over the head and gravity only takes over from the single point of the hair tie. Here we can see marks sculpt out the roundness of the head, with a little indication to the frizzy texture of the hair and clumping. Hairlines are extremely important in this kind of hairstyle, as they show the transition between skin and hair, and often have shorter, loose strands. Here we can see a changing hair line from the side, with its fairly uniform texture, to the softer curls at the back.

Drawing facial hair

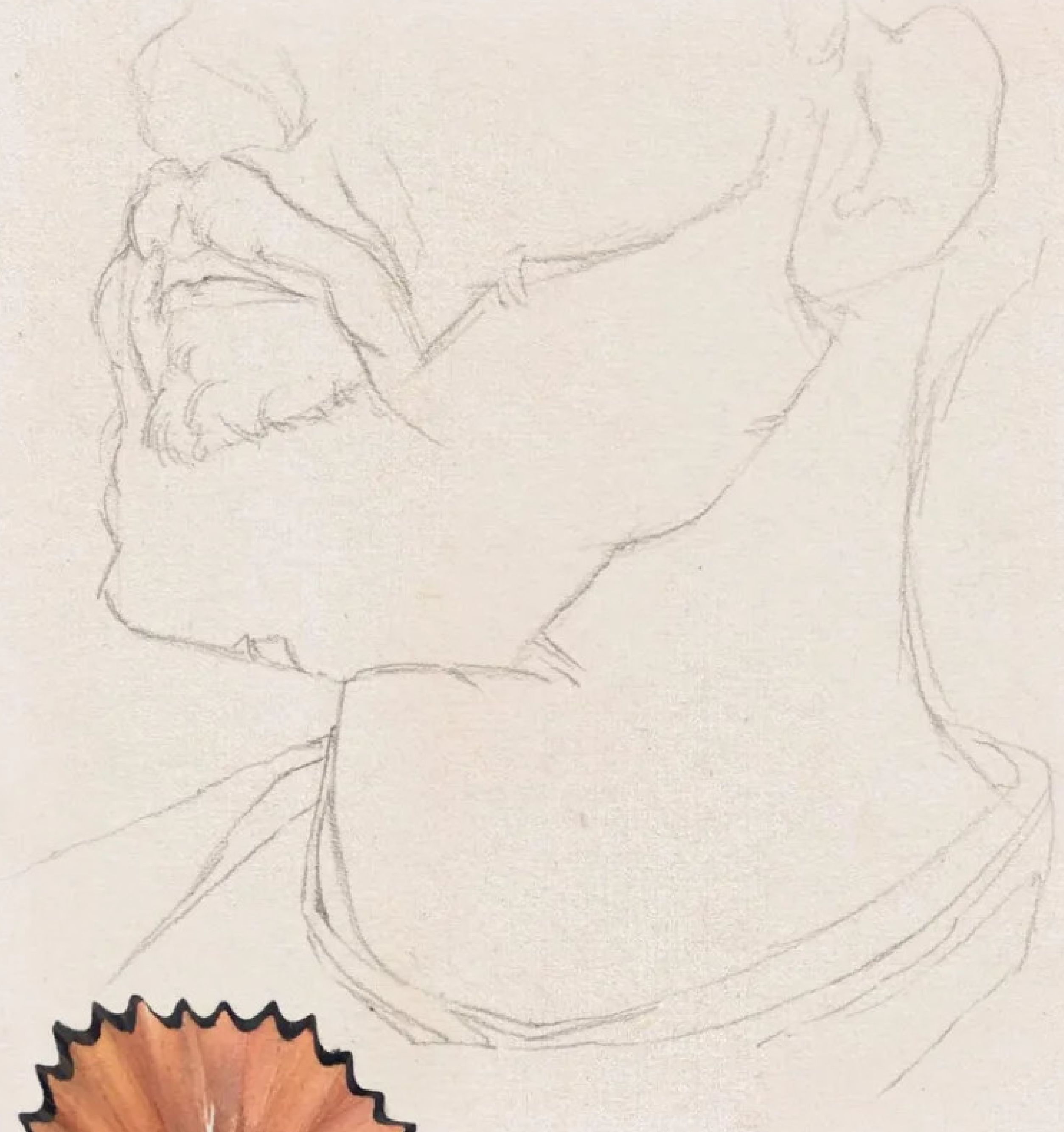
In this drawing process for facial hair, we are looking at the increased importance of texture

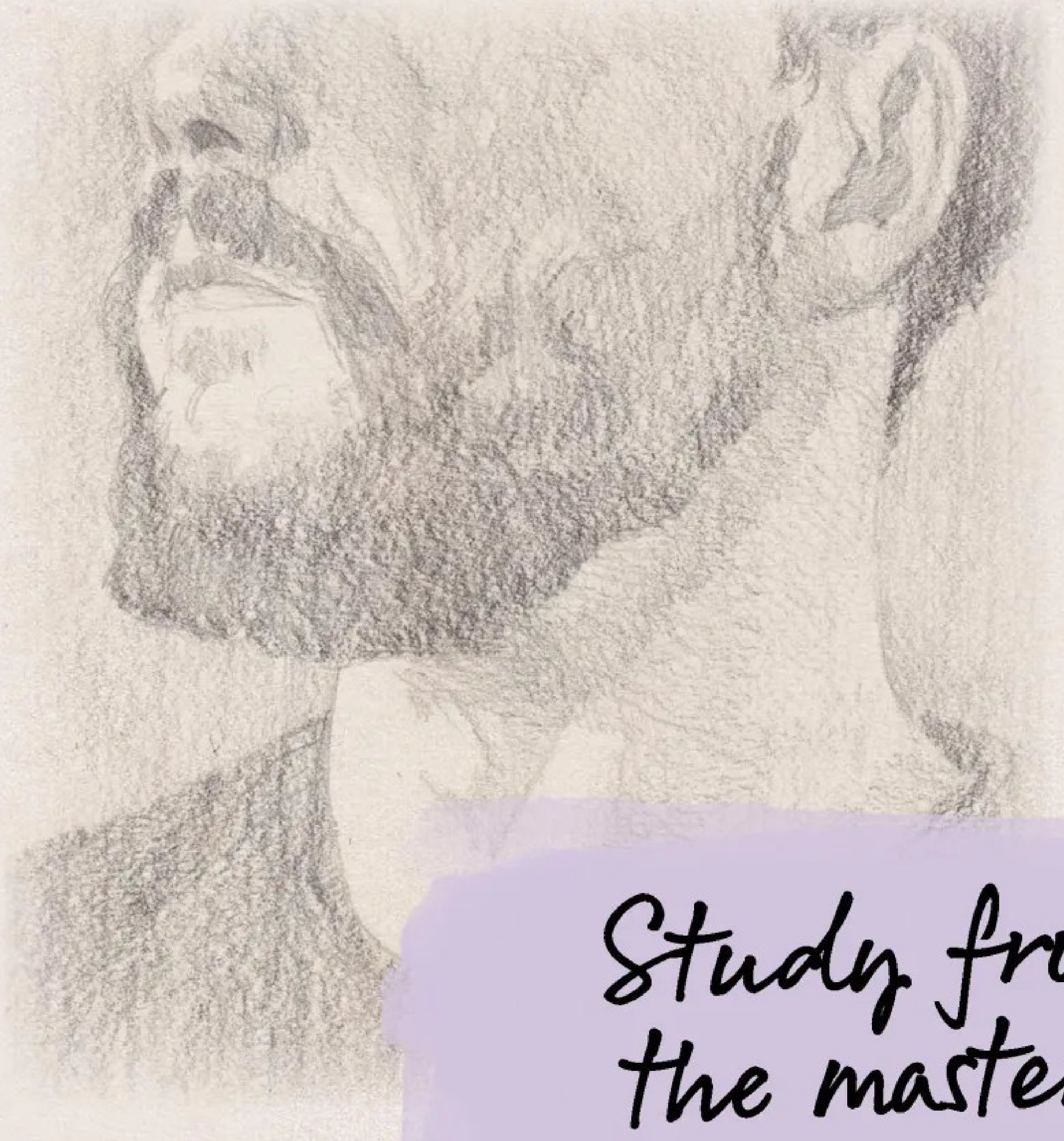
1 Initial shapes

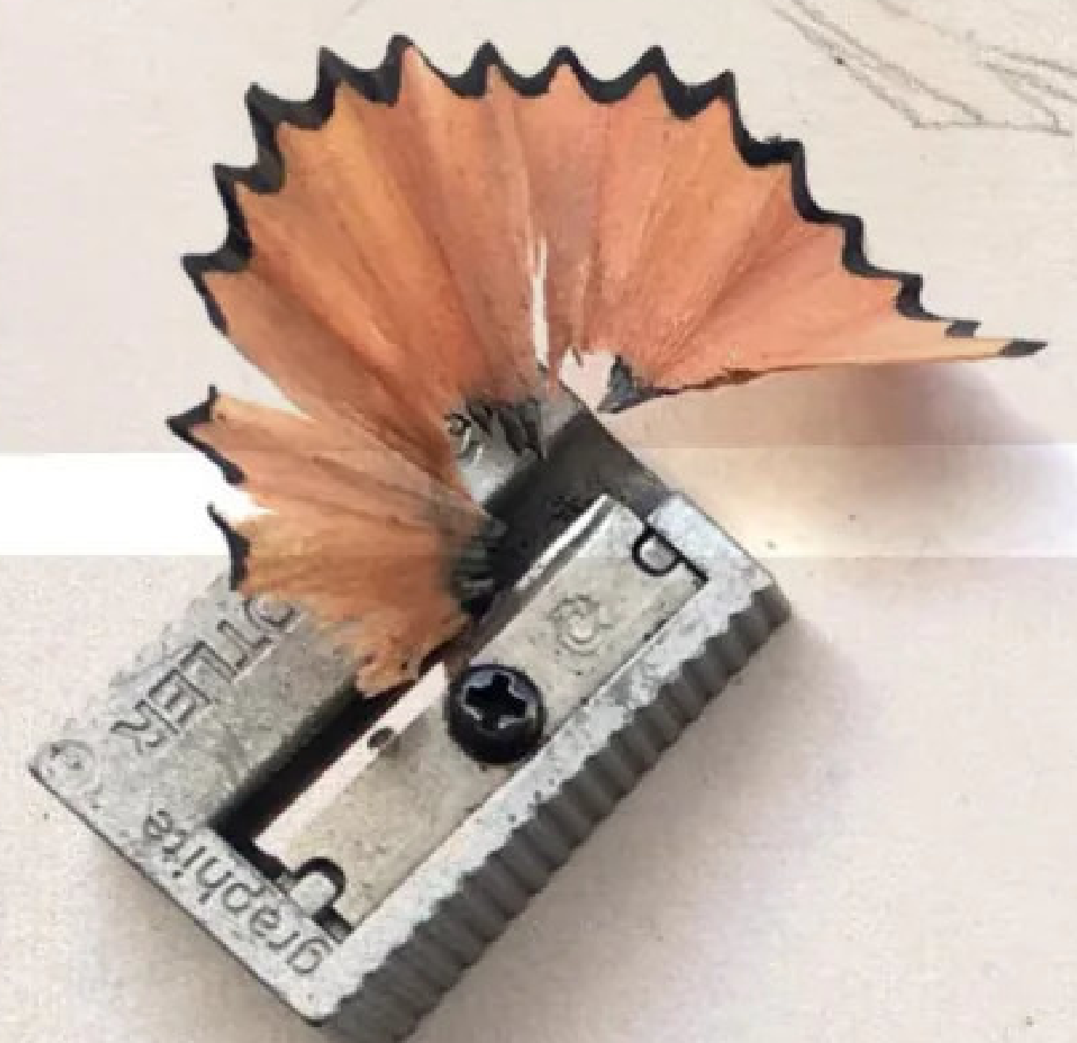
We want to start by laying in the shape – usually I would draw out the head structure first, then fit the shape of the facial hair to it. Facial hair wraps around the jaw, cheeks and the mouth, so it is on top of a variable and rounded surface. Here we can see the moustache curves around the upper lip, while the beard covers the jaw. Facial hair is very variable in its growth patterns, and in how individuals style it, so it is good to start with abstract shapes.

2 Blocking in tone

Like hair on the top of the head, facial hair tends to be much darker than the skin, unless it turns white. There are now flat areas of tone for the hair, skin, shirt, and background. Here we are starting to show the transition of facial hair to skin, by making the flat tones lighten up as they go up the cheek. This is also a good point to compare the darkness of the hair on the head to the facial hair – here it is only a bit darker, but sometimes facial hair can be a very different colour.

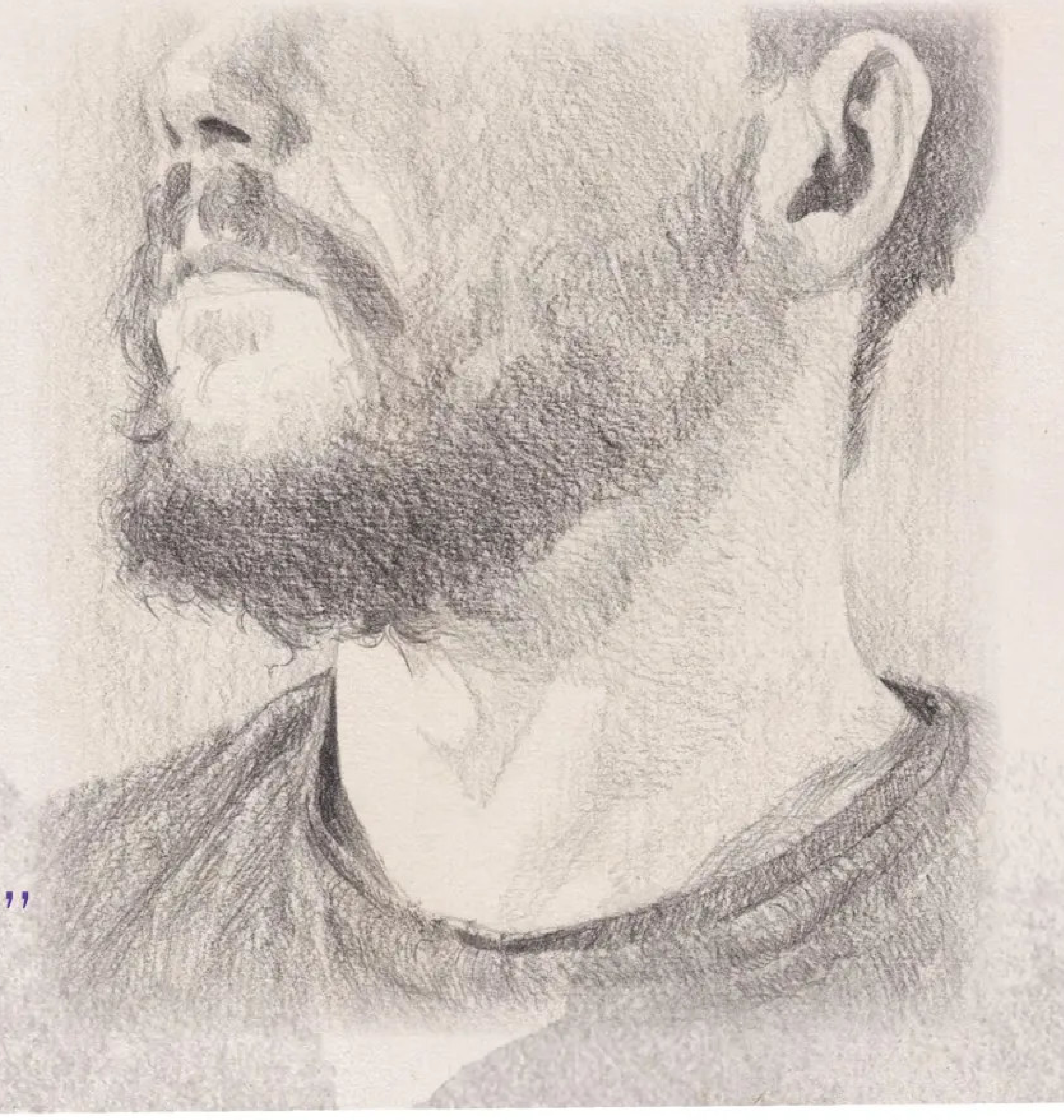






Study from the masters

A good way to practise drawing hair is to draw copies from master artists. This helps expand the marks you use, and you can learn from the different ways artists approach drawing hair. Try to think about how shape, texture and lines are used to simplify hair.



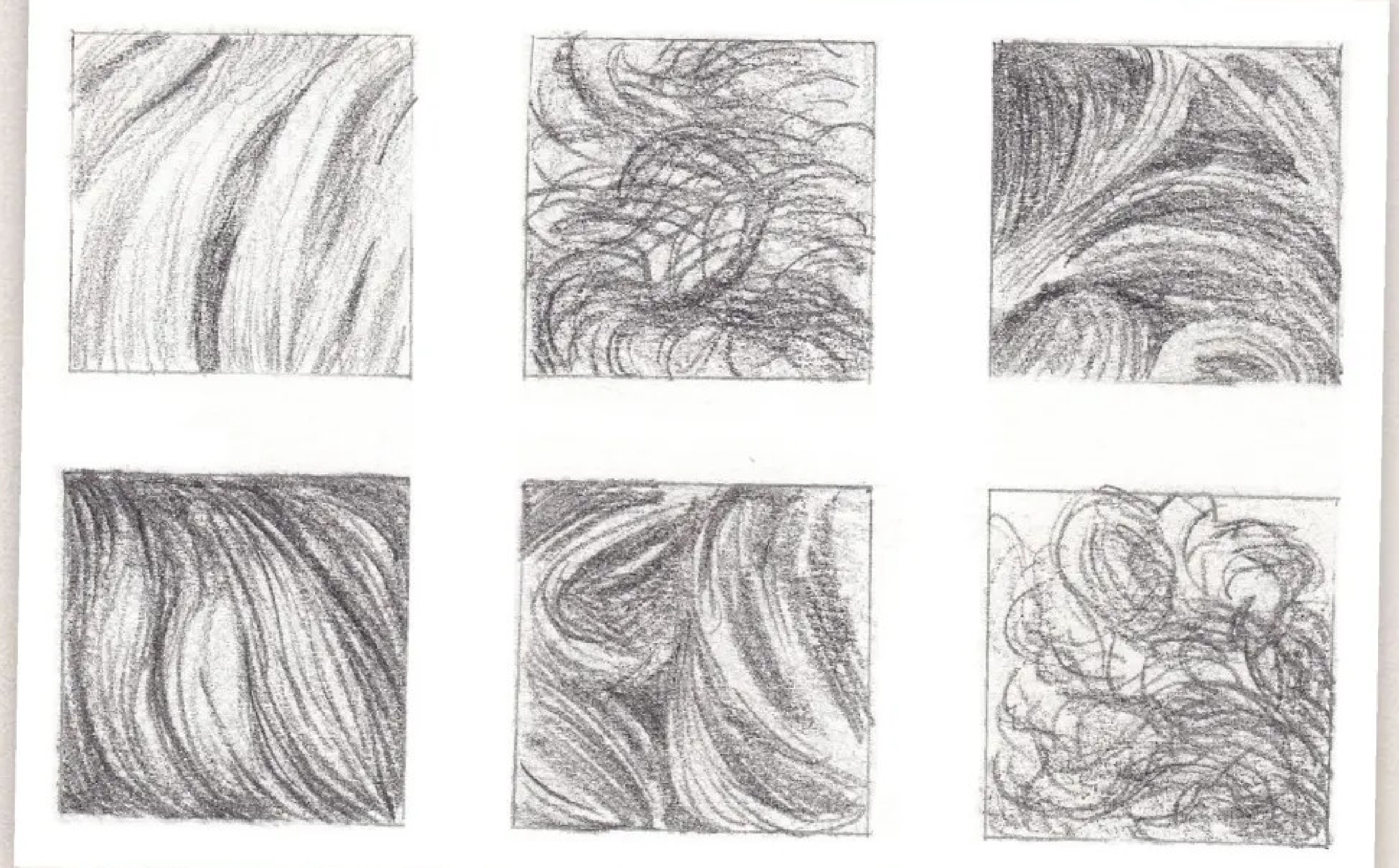
3 Edges and outlines

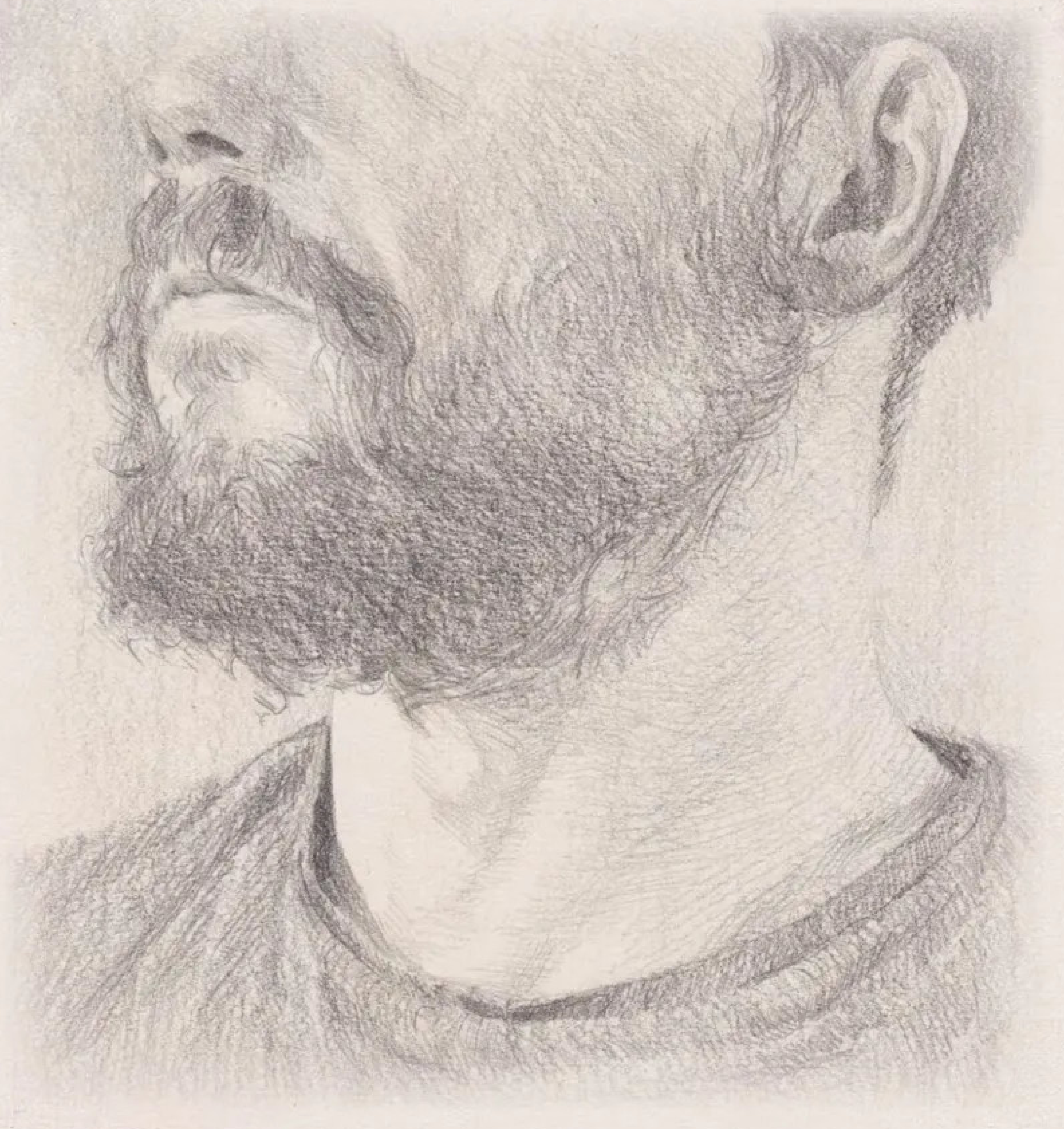
In this step, the outline with the background is starting to be resolved. Here the moustache, having shorter, straighter hair, is a bit more crisp than the rest of the beard, which has a softer outline. Within these soft edges, we can see loose strands of hair that help describe the texture, which in this case is very curly. Facial hair can be curly or straight, and does not have to match the hair on the top of the head. Defining the edges like this is the first step to describing texture.

> "We can see loose strands of hair that help describe the texture"

Texture practice

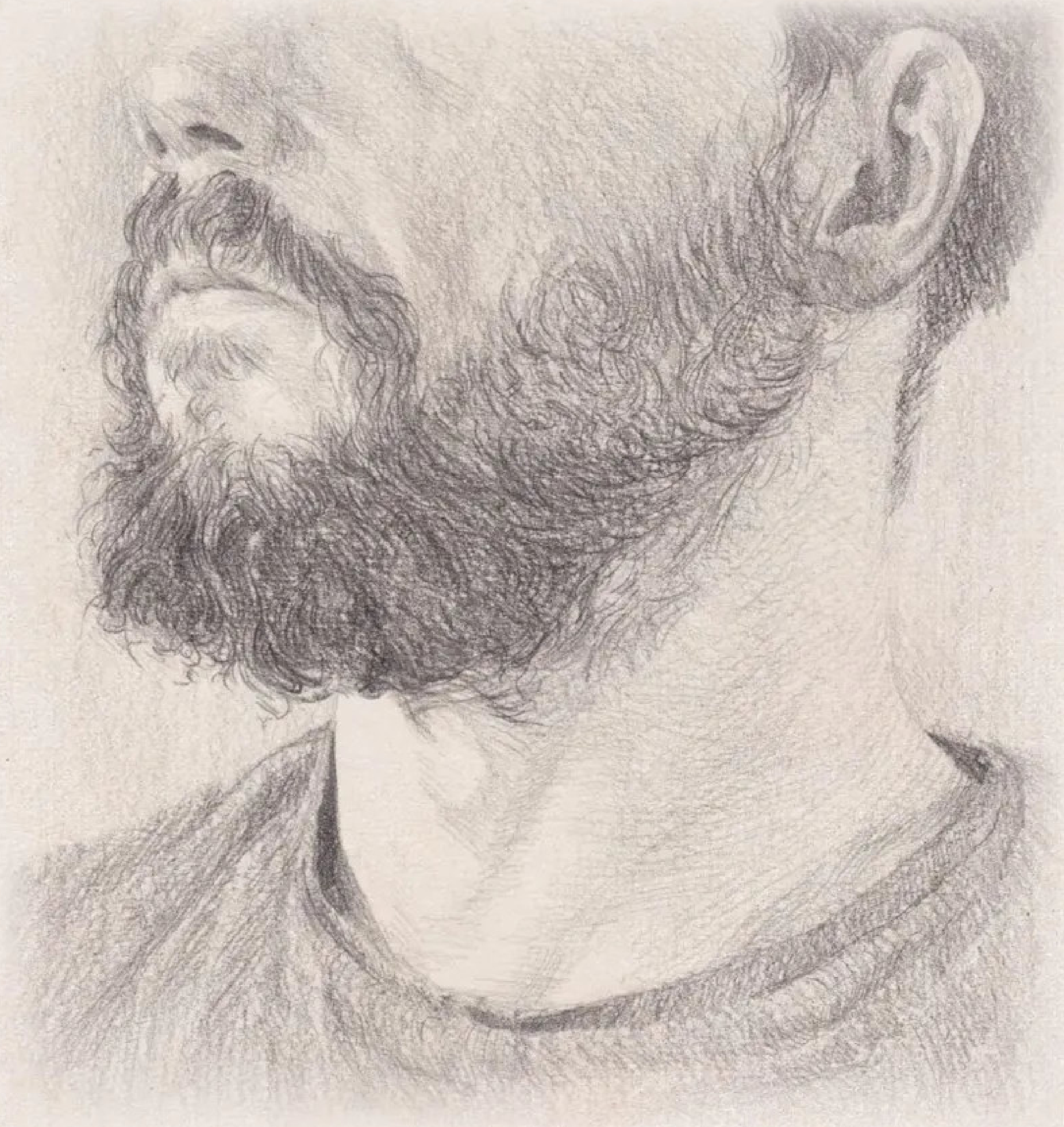
A quick exercise to help with getting the texture of the hair is to take a sheet of paper and practise making patches of texture. Do this while observing hair, and experiment with making different marks to describe the texture. Try layering different combinations as well.





4 ▲ Transition to skin

A big difference in facial hair to the rest of the hair on the head is the transition to skin. There is often a lot of variety in this boundary, both between individuals (both naturally and due to shaping) and within the facial hair itself. When hair is shaved back, it will leave crisper edges, and this also happens for denser areas of hair, as we see here around the chin and moustache. However, hair can decrease in density and slowly transition to skin, as we see on the cheek and under the jaw, creating a tonal gradient.

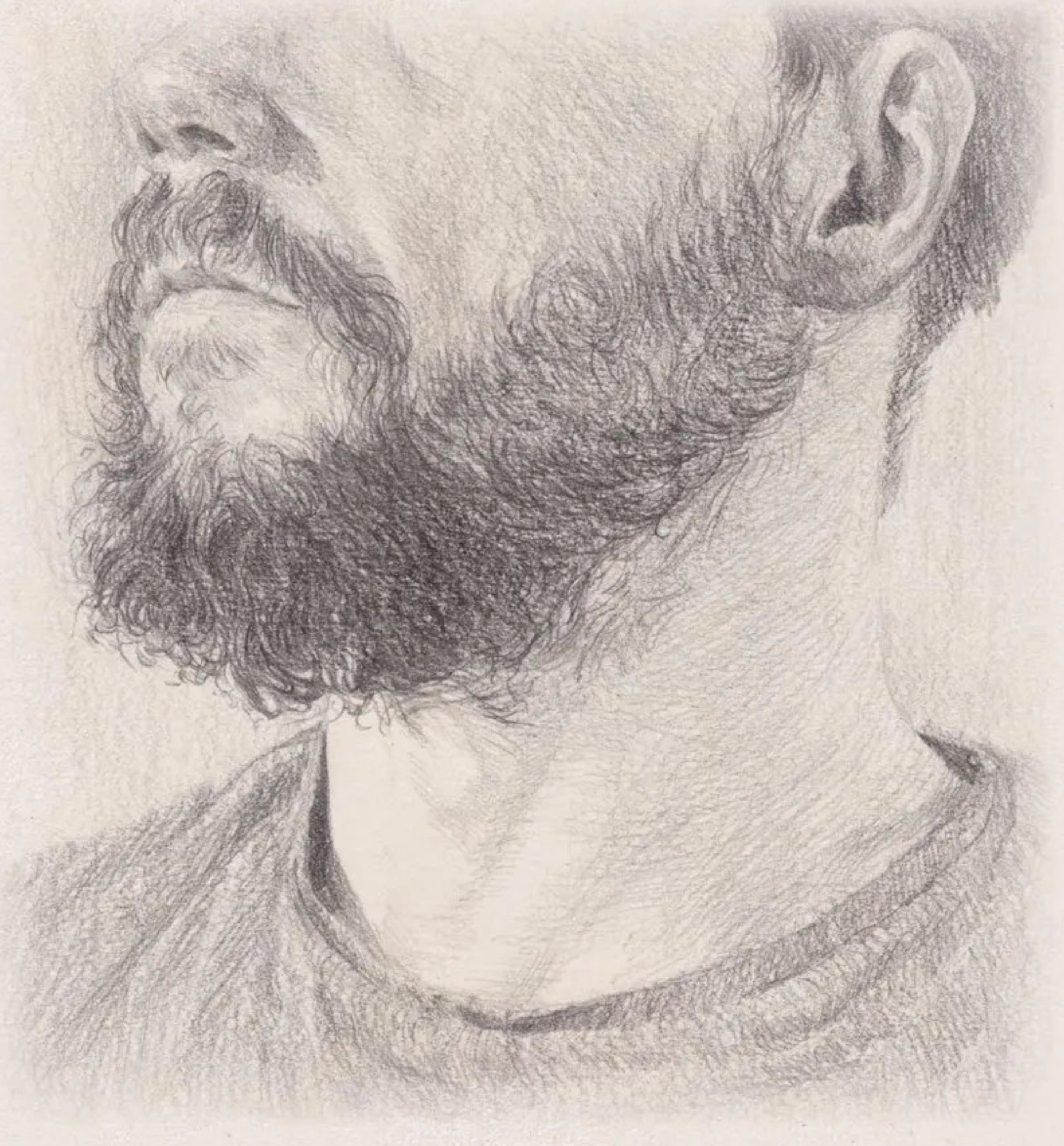


5 ◀ Texture and directional marks

Texture has been added to the main body of the beard now. This is following the general direction and nature of the hair, rather than detailing every single strand. Be mindful of how the texture can change. Here there is a difference between the more straight moustache hair, compared to the more curly hair around the cheek and chin. The marks also help describe the direction the hair grows, especially in transitional areas. Around the chin, the hair is denser; beard hair tends to be coarser than head hair, and will be able to support itself.

6 ▶ Final details

To finalise the drawing, the tone in the thickest parts of the beard has been darkened a bit more, helping to separate it from those of the skin. There are also little gaps indicated in the hair under the chin to help indicate the diffuse nature of the hair, alongside some extra loose hairs being added around the boundary of the beard to push the texture. Edges are important with facial hair – they have been softened even further in a few places around the chin, to push the idea of soft hair.



Develop a self-portrait

Lancelot Richardson demonstrates a self-portrait drawing, including more creative setups and tonal drawing ideas that lead to painting

About **LANCELOT**
Brighton, UK
Lancelot Richardson is a painter and freelance illustrator. He also works at independent drawing school Draw Brighton as a life drawing tutor. Alongside life drawing, he also teaches imaginative drawing techniques there.
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Self-portraits have long been a popular subject for a wide variety of artists, from those who produce the occasional self-portrait to others who have built a body of work in this genre.

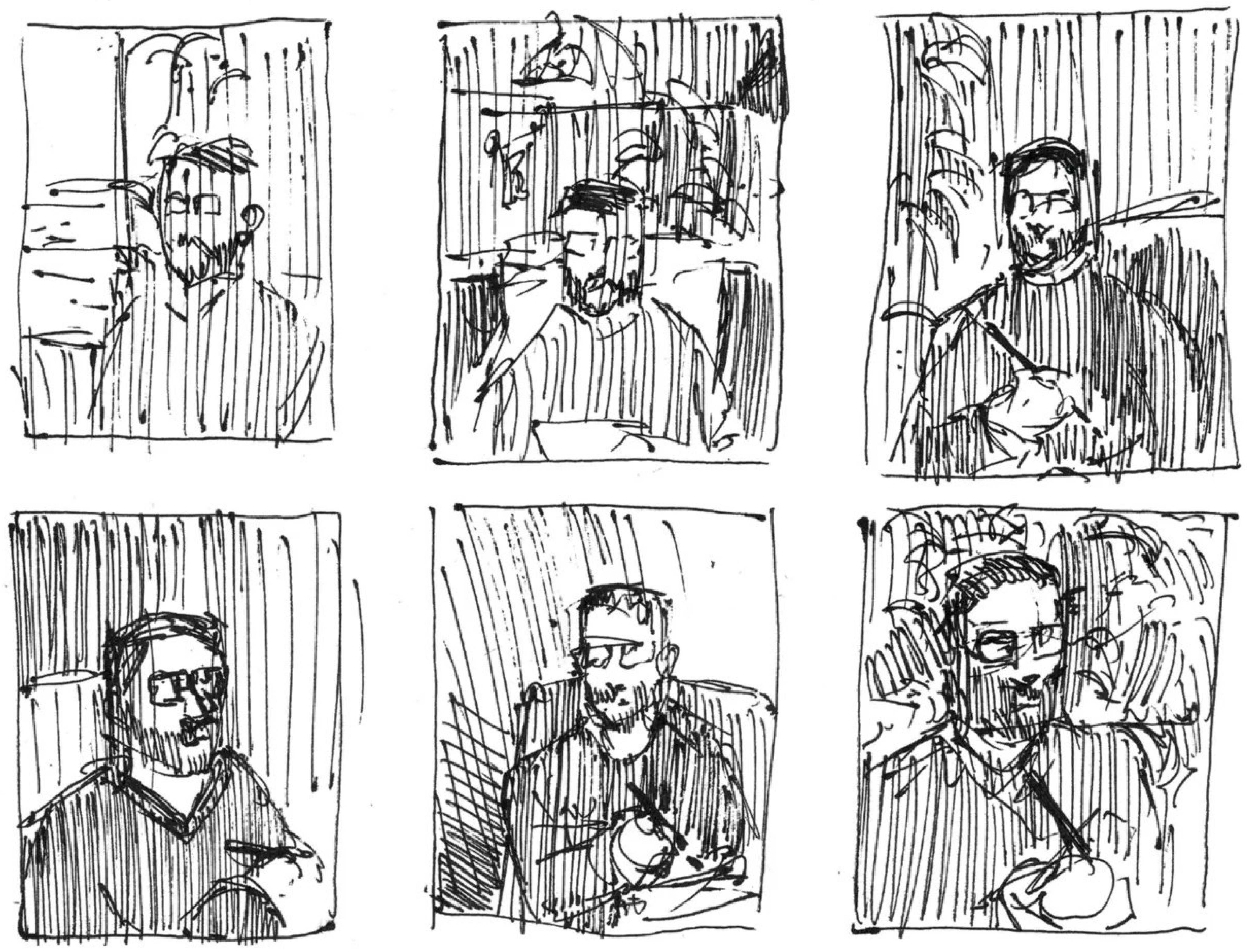
In this tutorial, we will examine creative approaches to the self-portrait and setting up for drawing from observation. It is easy to fall into the habit of drawing disembodied heads from a frontal view, so we'll think about planning a self-portrait and look for creative ways to set up. As we enter the latter stages of the drawing, we'll think about how we can use tonal ideas such as value layouts and edges to prepare for the painting process.

I will be working from life in creating this drawing; while photos are a tempting convenience, it is good practice to draw from life. Photographs can be really useful if drawing is not a viable option, such as being in a changing environment, or when posing with animals, but they come with many hazards. If you need a photograph, still take care to plan your self-portrait – resist the urge to copy a face and call it a day! If you are worried about staring too much in your drawing, a quick photo of the eyes looking in another direction can help as a reference too.

When confronted with ourselves, it can be tough not to be self-conscious of one's looks. Try to relax as much as you can, as tenseness will carry over into your drawing – one perk of the self-portrait is that you have no one to offend! Think about how you design your portrait, such as including clothing elements, setting, and props that reflect your tastes. If you are short of inspiration, I would highly recommend looking at self-portraits from art history.

Materials

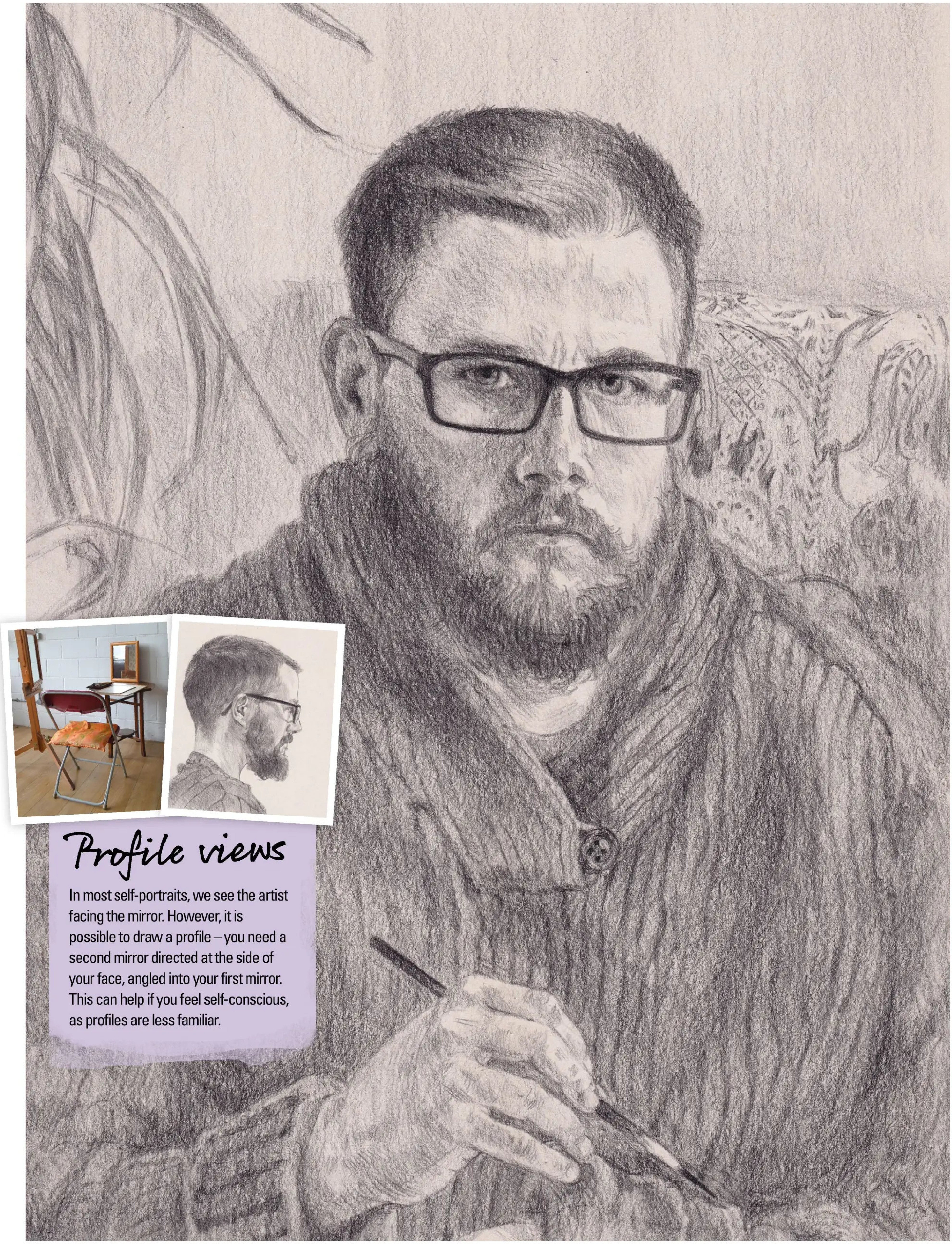
- ☐ Seawhite Newsprint paper
- ☐ Conté à Paris - Pierre Noire B Pencil
- ☐ Kneaded eraser
- ☐ Electric eraser
- ☐ Mirror



1

Plan your self-portrait

Whether you are just planning on creating a developed drawing, or intending to paint your self-portrait, a good starting place is to draw some thumbnails. It is easy to plop down into a chair and not really think about the elements you include in your image – often dooming the portrait to becoming a generic floating head. Before you start, try drawing some thumbnails, as even very sketchy ones like these can help you process ideas and compositions on paper. What clothes are you going to wear? How much of the body will you include? How will you light your portrait?



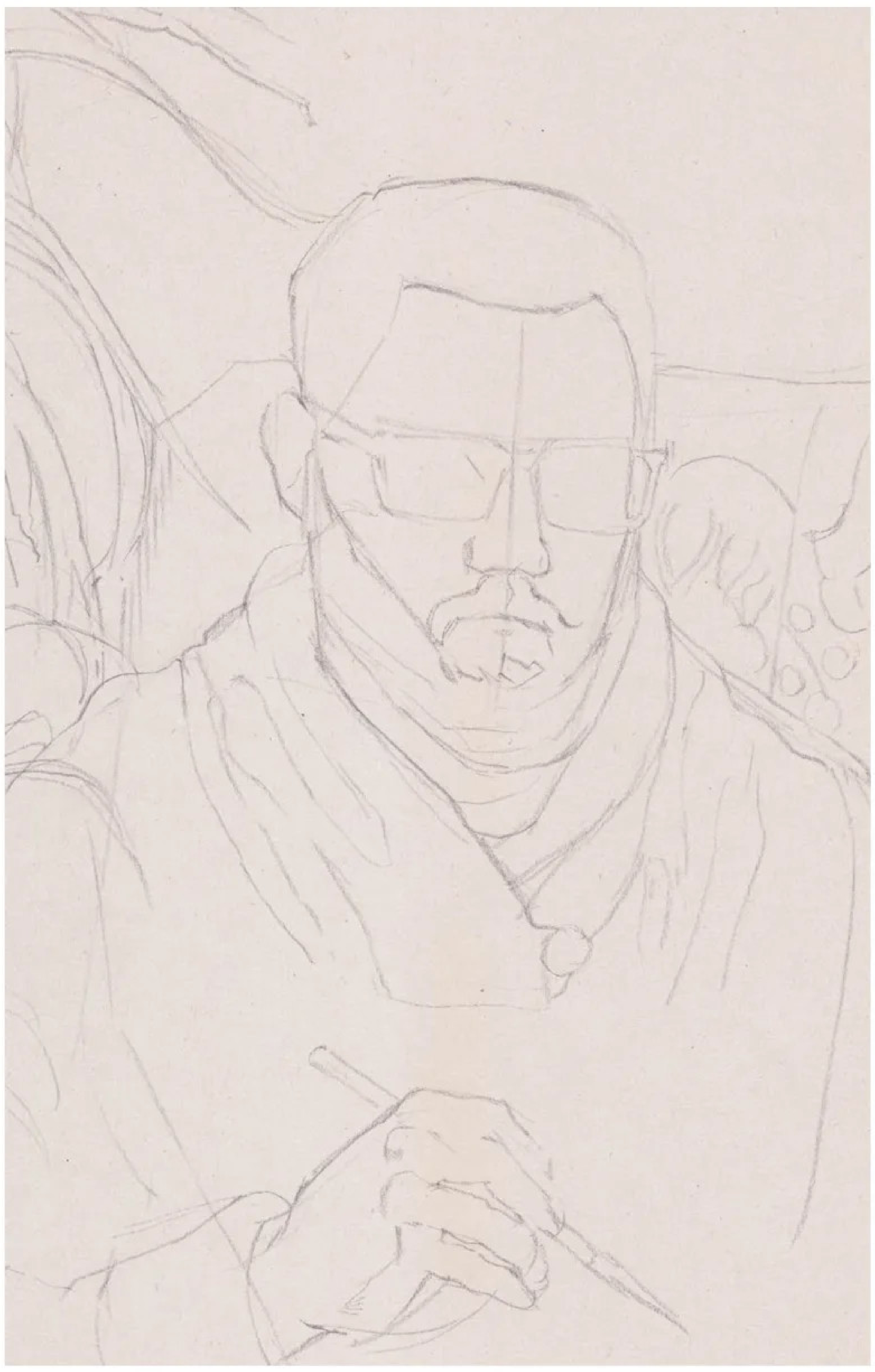
Profile views

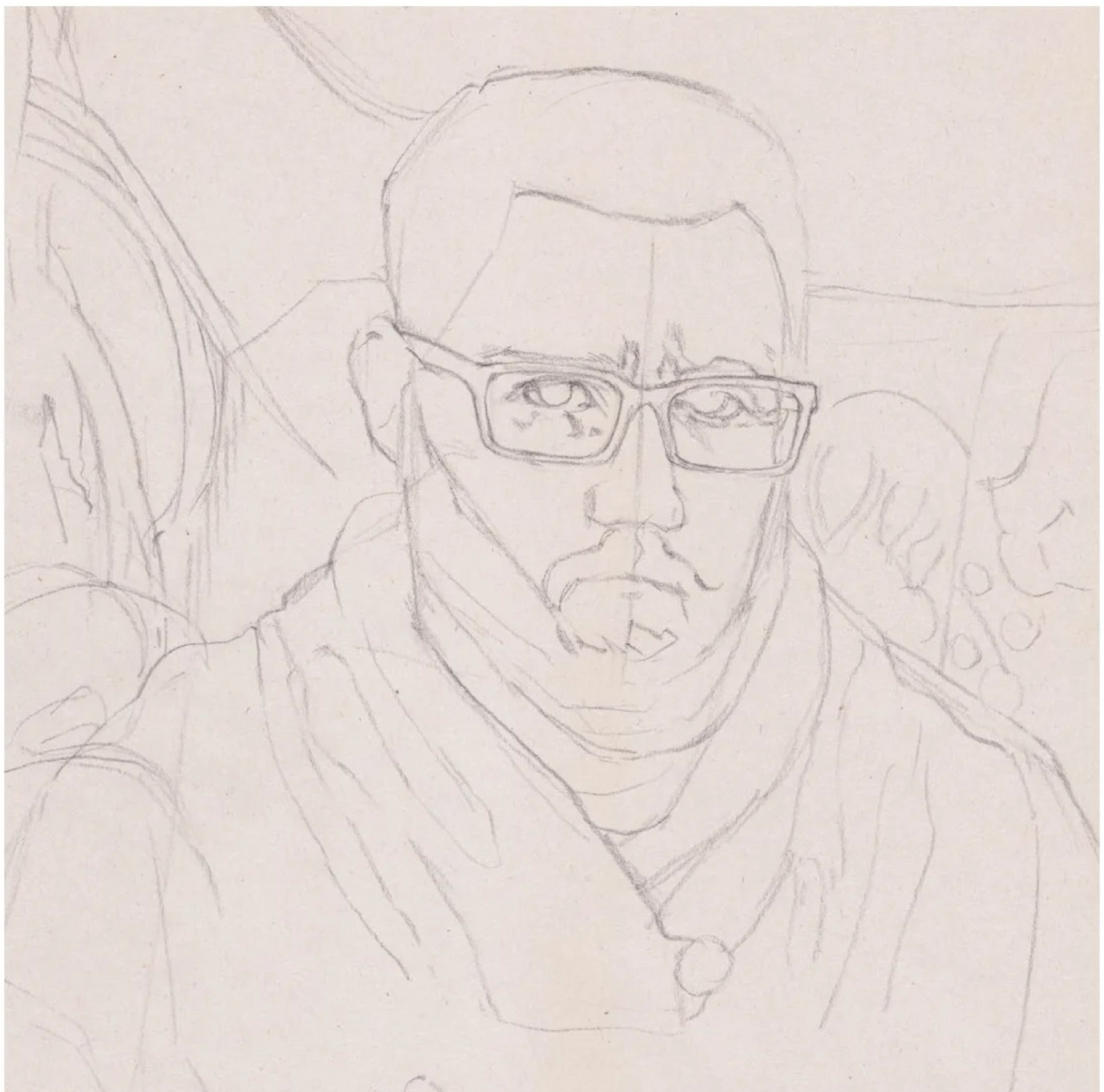
In most self-portraits, we see the artist facing the mirror. However, it is possible to draw a profile – you need a second mirror directed at the side of your face, angled into your first mirror. This can help if you feel self-conscious, as profiles are less familiar.

The sketch

2 Set up

As this self-portrait is going to be drawn from life, I need to be set up with my design in mind. This means getting furniture in place, and ensuring I have a light source. Drawing from life is best whenever possible, as we see more information than a photograph can capture, and it is a richer challenge to improve your drawing. Try to ensure the setup is comfortable enough to sit in for a while, especially ensuring the mirror is at a comfortable height.



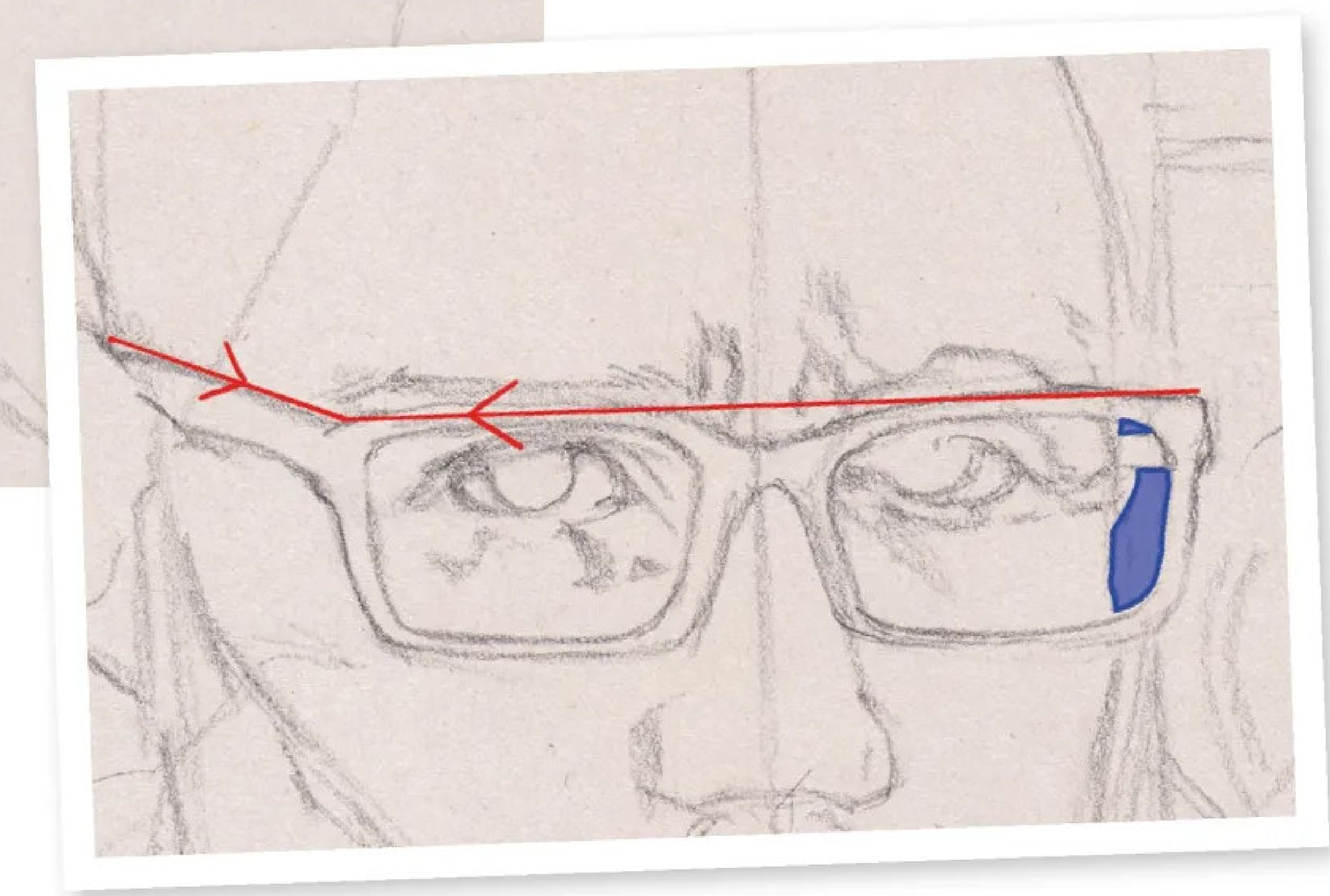


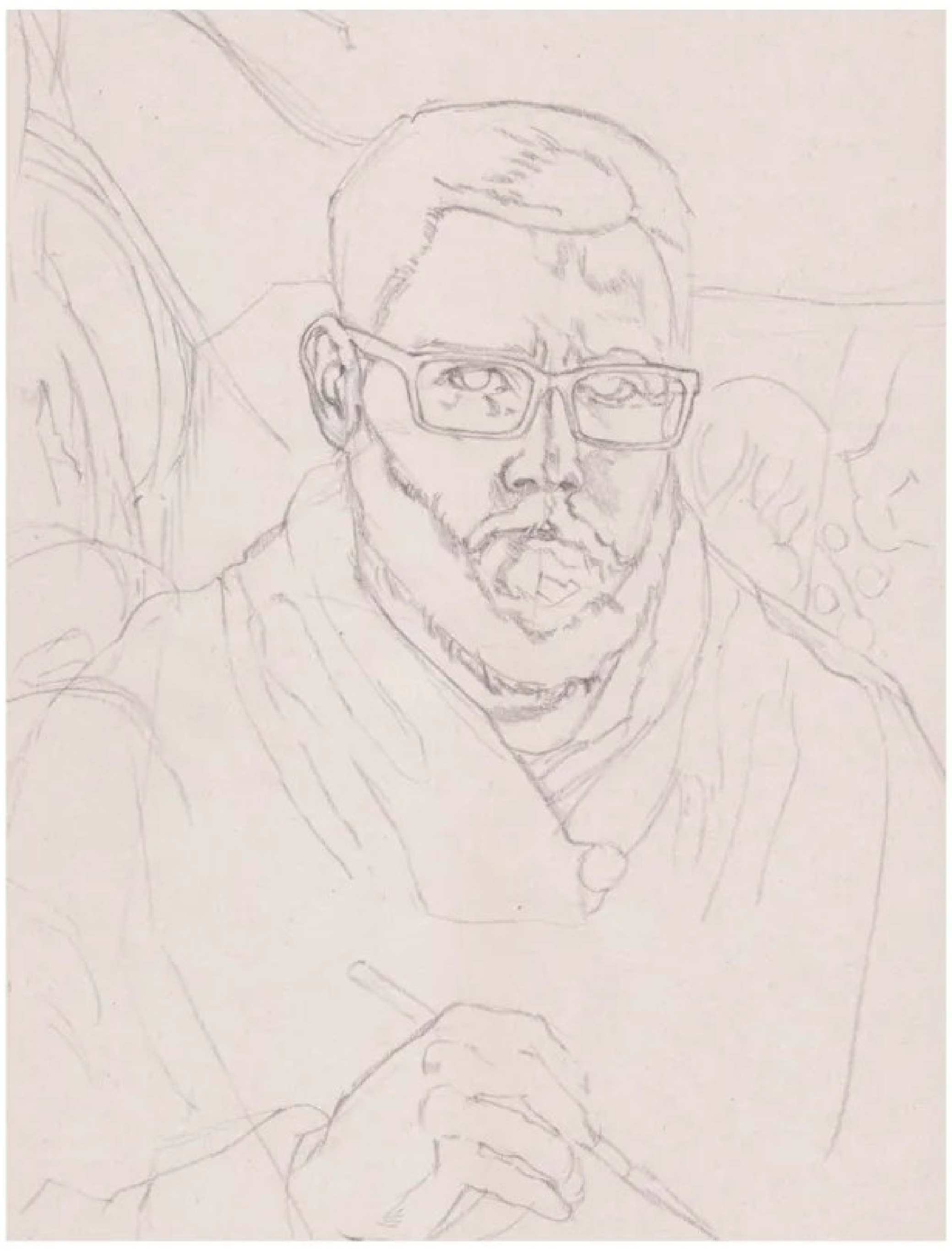
3 Get started

I start by blocking in all the major shapes and elements in my portrait onto the page. At this point, I am referring to my thumbnail almost as much as observing what is there, as everything needs to fit in frame. It is worth noting that everything in the picture has been loosely sketched out, so it is clear how all the elements interact on this scale. A common trap is to start from the head and work out, running out of space later on in the drawing. By referencing everything around us, we reduce the chance of this happening.

4 Eyes and glasses

Glasses can be a big challenge when drawing anyone's portrait, but it gets tricky when we draw ourselves, as we are looking up and down at our page constantly. To help keep the position of your glasses consistent, check the negative shapes they form with the side of the face. Here, I included the negative shapes to the right of the face early on – when I look up at the mirror, I can check it is the same when I reposition my head. It is also important to be mindful of the angle of the frame of the glasses.



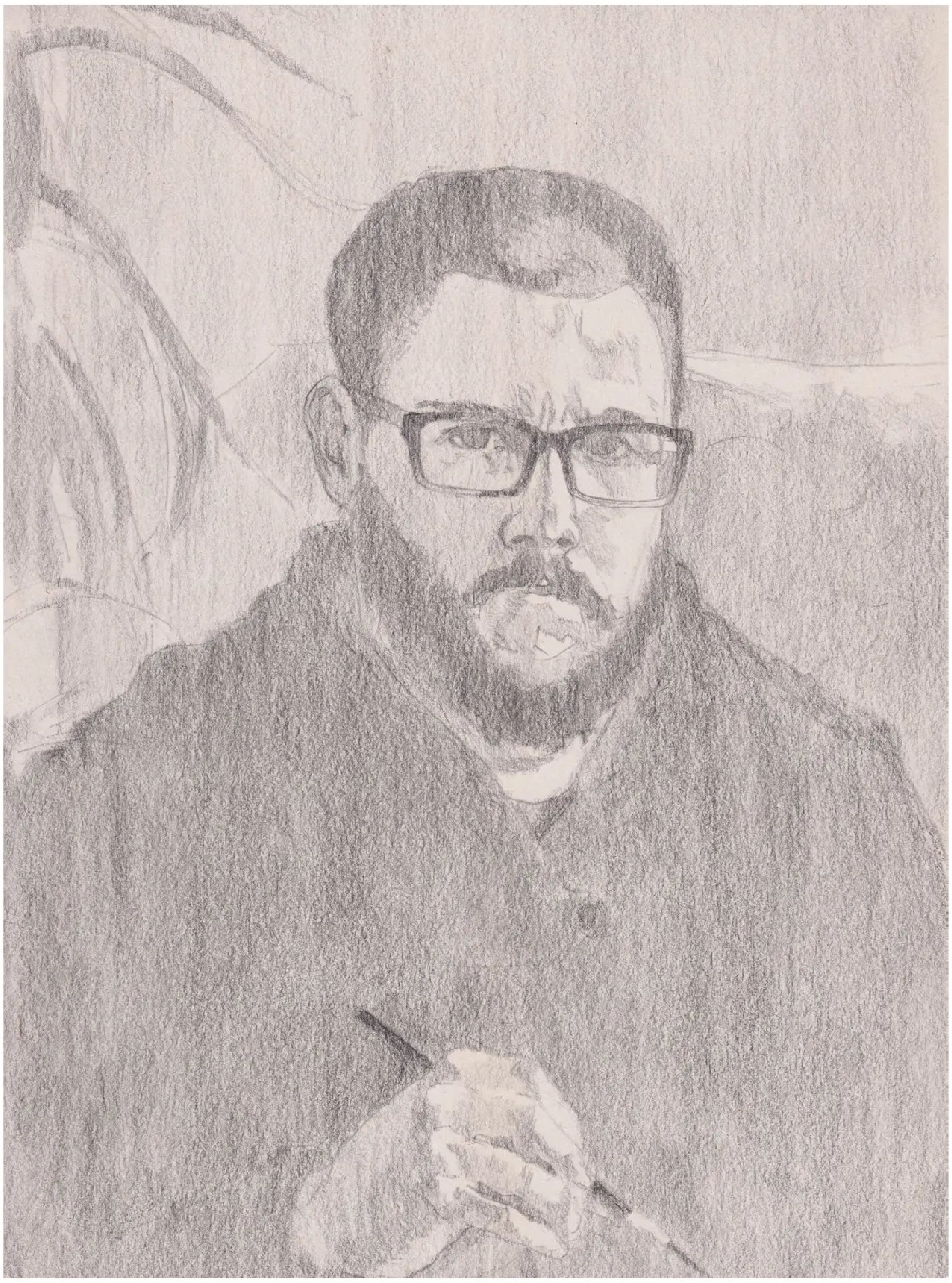


5 Draw the face

As the face is the focus of the picture, I am just going through and ensuring that all the features are drawn in and in proportion. This is also a good time to block in the shape of the hair, beard and shadows. At this stage, I am holding off on the details, and trying to broadly work over the portrait as a whole, keeping all of my underdrawing relatively light. This means I can adjust it easily in later stage of the drawing.

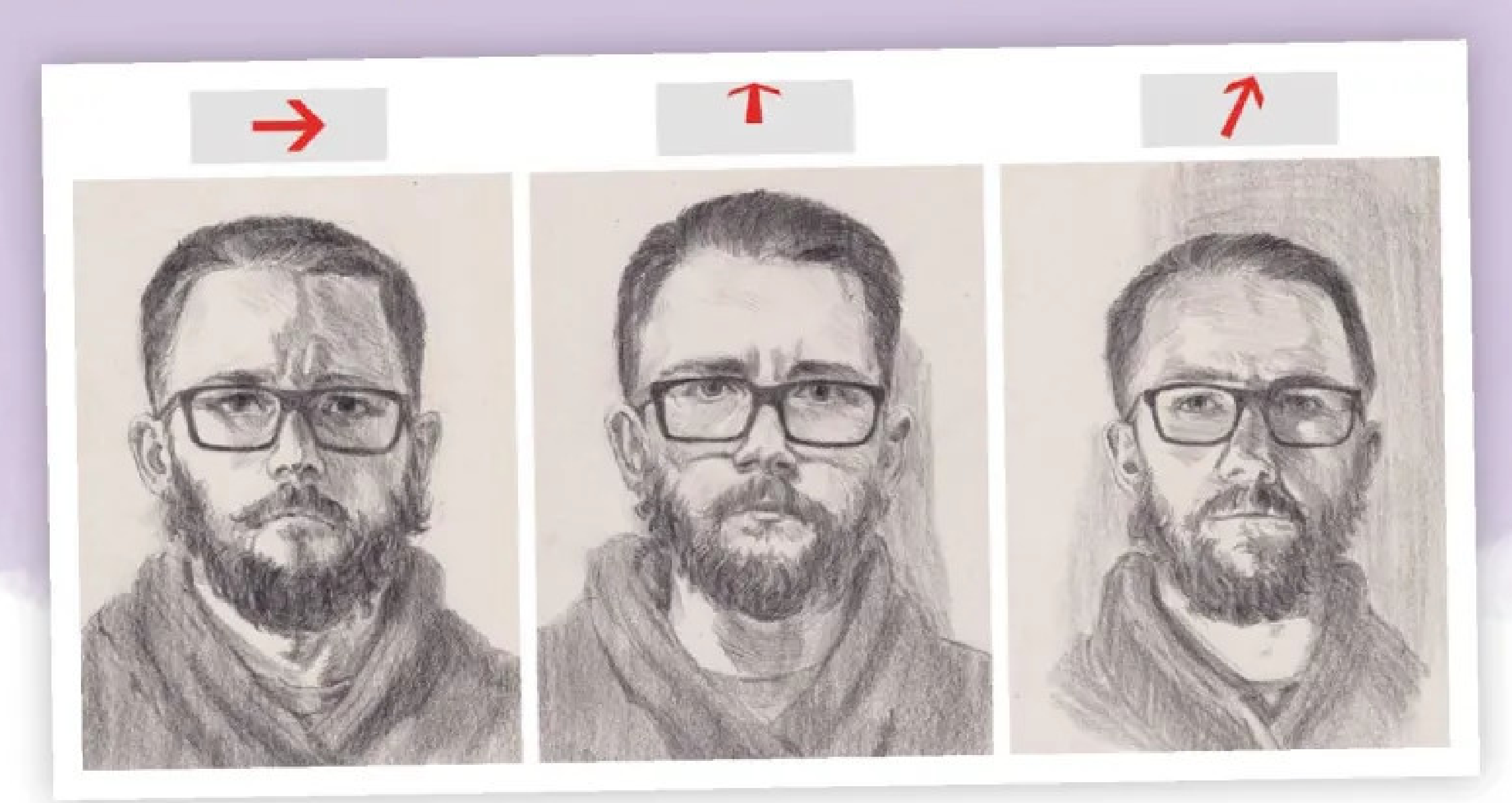
6 Lay in tones

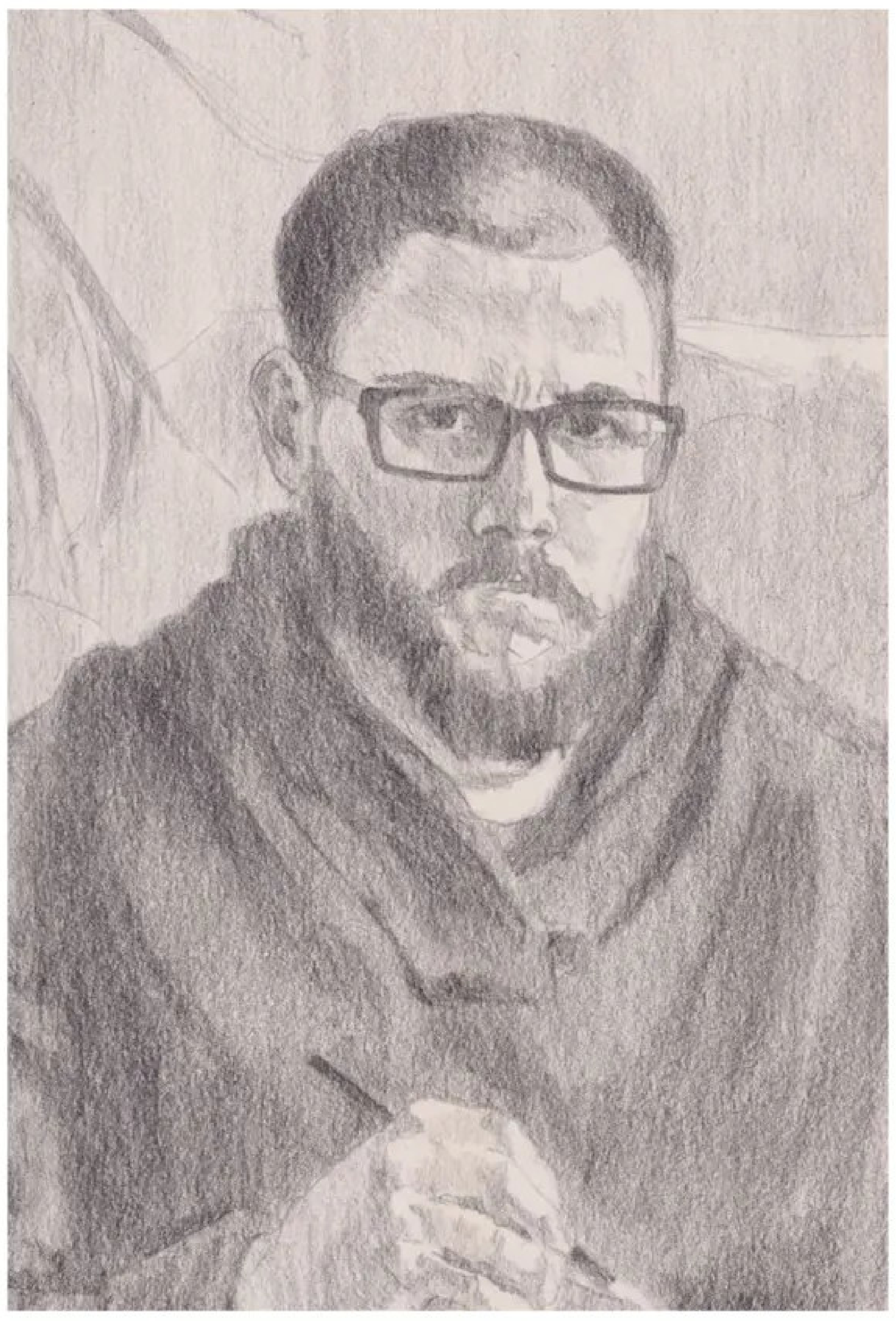
Here I am laying in the broadest areas of tone possible, and keeping the shading very flat. We want to do this before entering into the details of the image in order to create a clear tonal plan across the whole image. If we were to divide the image up tonally, the skin tones occupy our lightest values, the background takes up our midtones, and the hair and jumper are the darkest areas. Doing this helps the viewer identify the different elements – skin, fabric, hair, etc as it is more akin to how we see tone in real life.



Creating interest with light

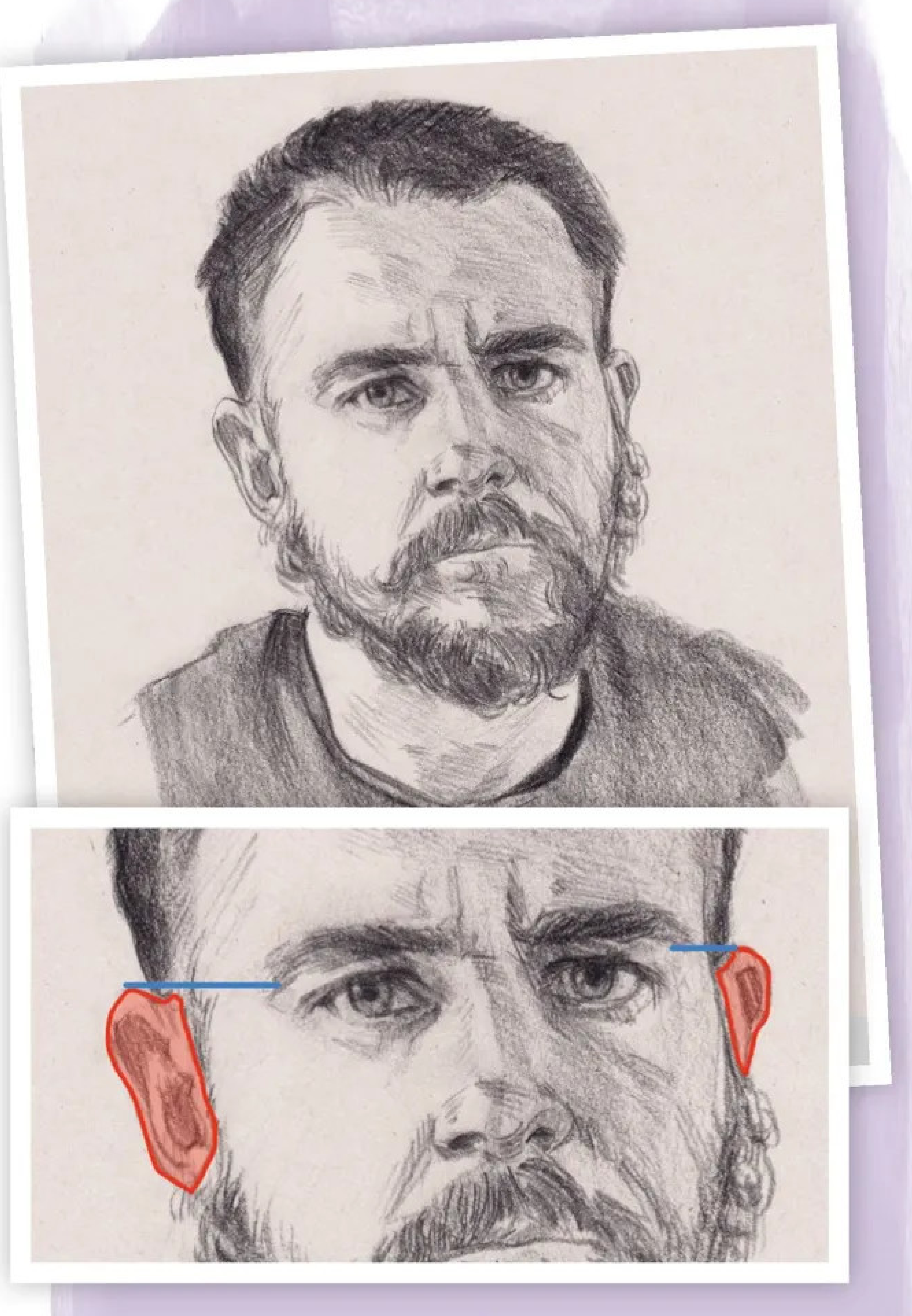
Try experimenting with your light sources, rather than relying on the ambient light sources around you. Below I have used side, frontal and under lighting. Having a clear light direction will add a sense of consistency to our portrait drawing, and all you need is a desk lamp.





7 Add in shadows

With all of our tonal areas laid out, we can start placing the shadow shapes in. Pay attention to how most of the shadows on the face still do not get that dark – the range of values on the skin cannot get as dark as the jumper or hair, because the skin is much lighter here. Ensure you compare the shadows in different areas of your picture like this as it keeps those broad tonal areas separate and creates a more harmonious overall image.

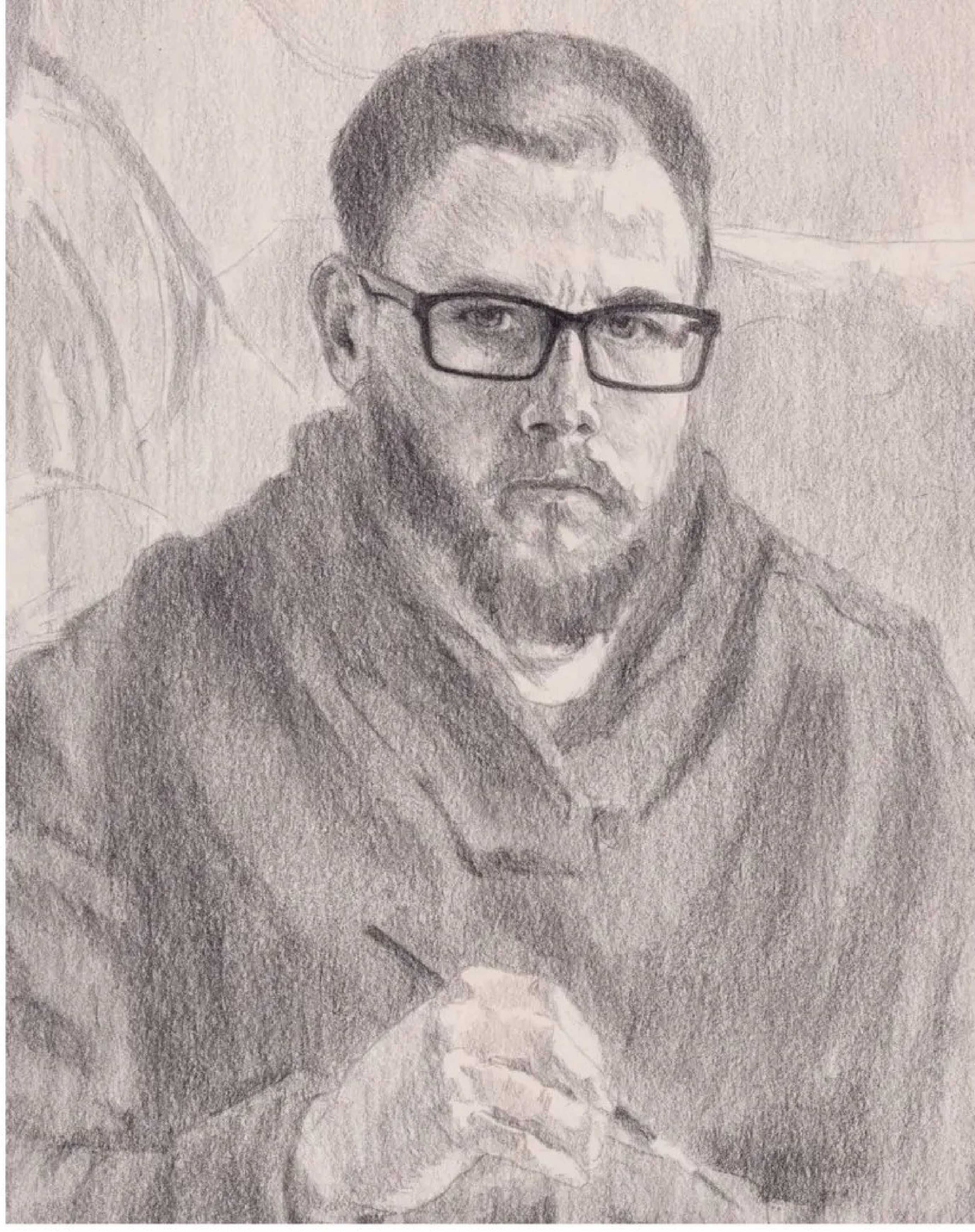


Holding a consistent pose

It is easy to turn our head out of its initial position. To maintain the same pose, find a reliable point or negative shape. Often checking the shape of the ears, and their level relative to the eyes is good reference – here the ears line up to the eyebrows.

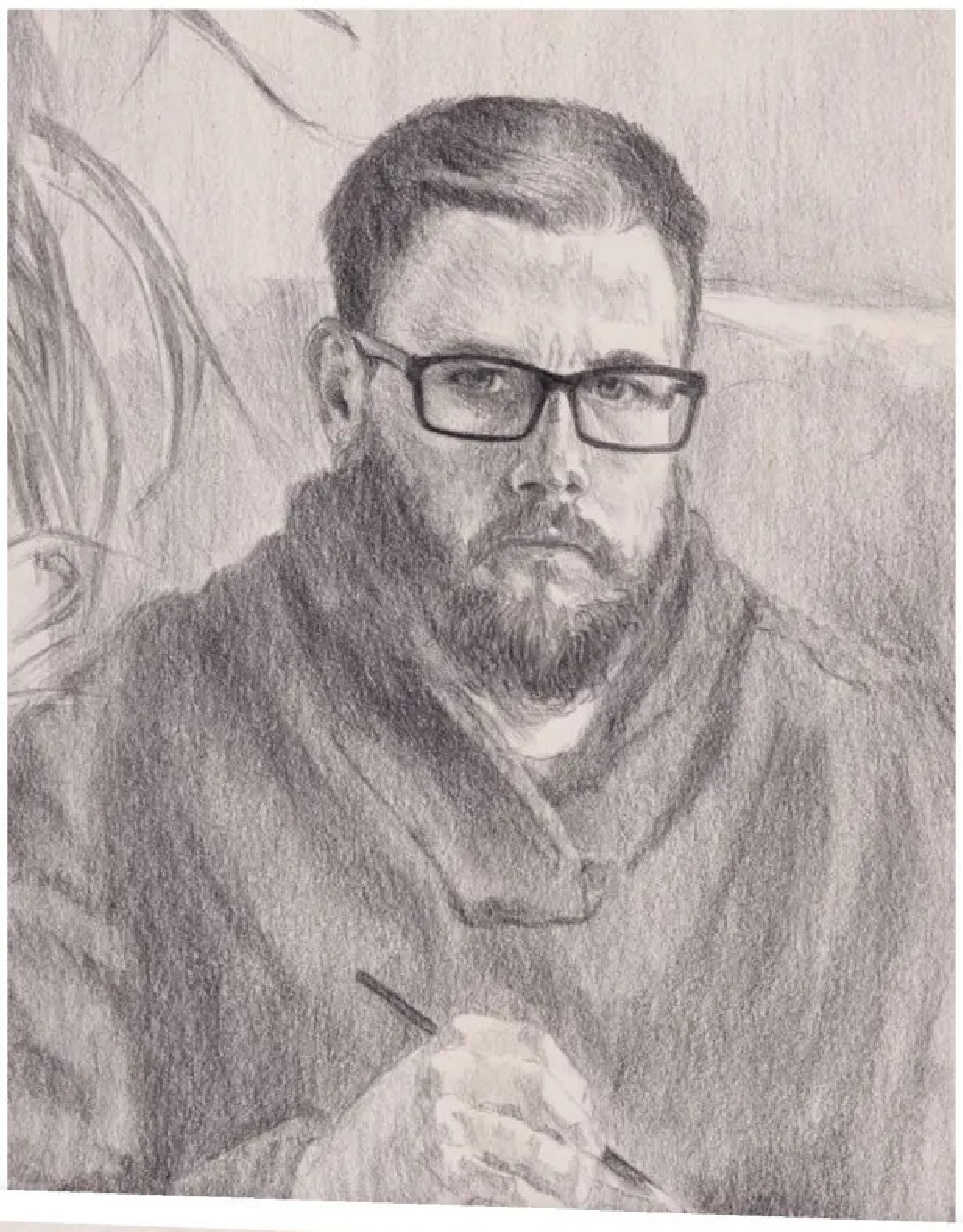
8 Add detail to the face

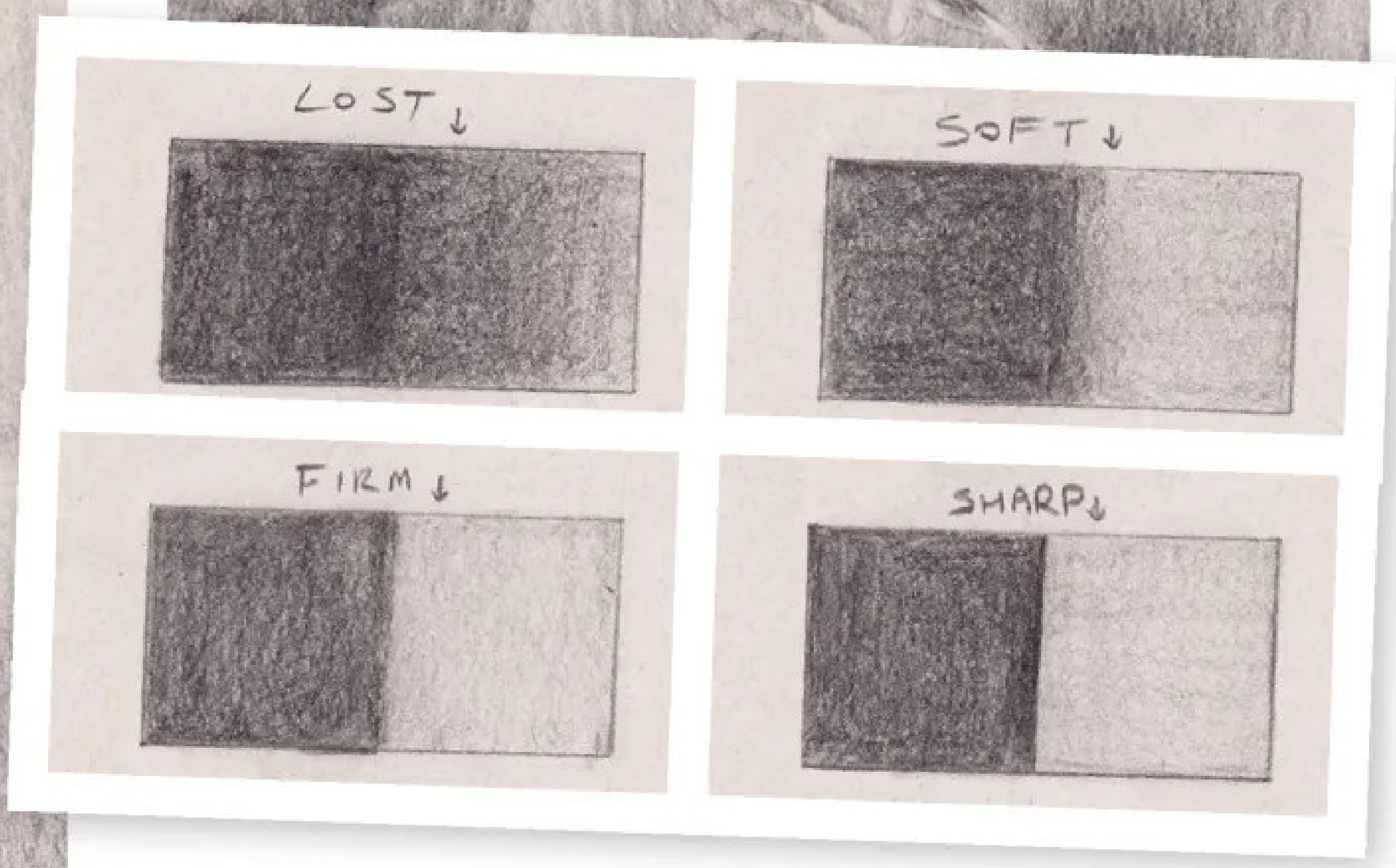
Since the face is the main focus on this drawing, it will need the highest concentration of detail. We can use detail to create contrast in our drawing, by working up focal areas like this, and allowing the less important areas to be simpler, giving the eye a rest as it travels through the image. Here I have particularly worked up the features of the face, pushing the tonal contrast a bit further, and introduced textures to the hair and beard.

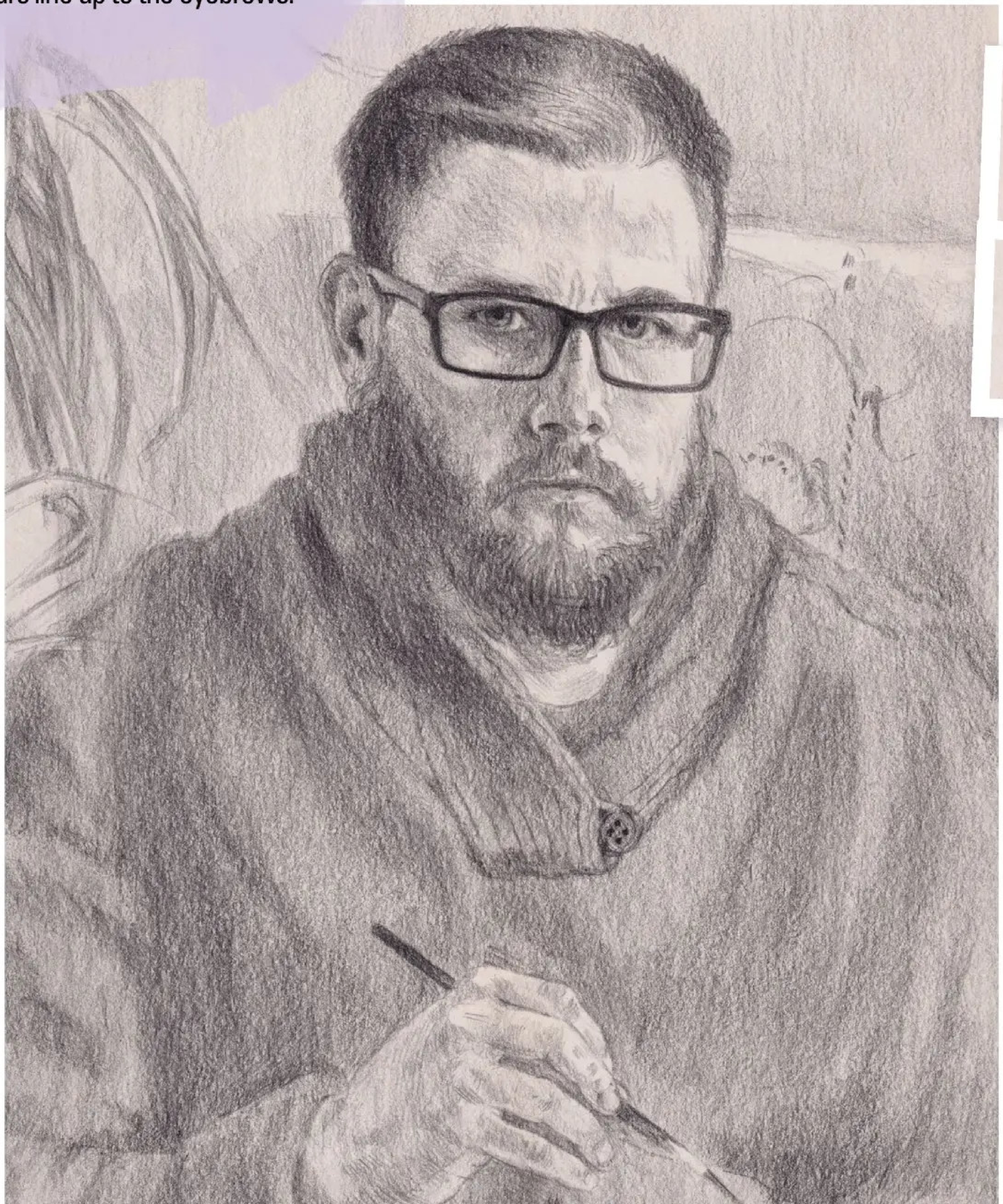


9 Edges and silhouettes

Here I am clarifying the silhouette of the plant in the background, and softening some of the edges around the beard. Edges are an important property in both tonal drawing and painting. They effectively come in four main types – sharp, firm, soft, and lost – as they show transition from one area of tone to another. It is important to have a variety of edges in your drawings and paintings; the lost edges in the beard here describe its softness, while the hard plastic of the glasses is carried with a sharper edge.





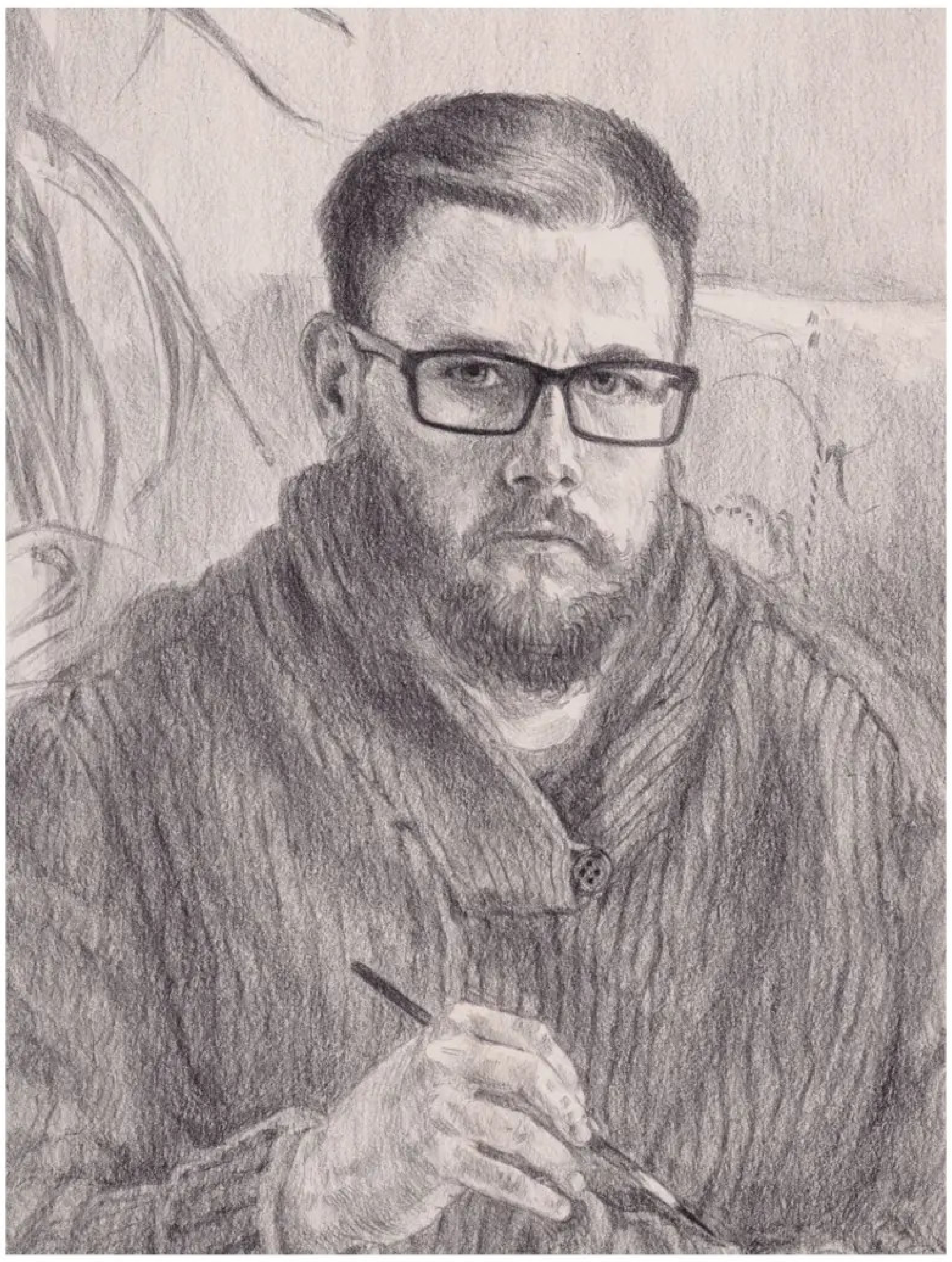


10 Push the darks

With all my major shadows blocked in, I have opted to push the darkest spots that bit further. This is done by layering more tone in on top. This stage seems quite minor, but we are drastically expanding the tonal range of the picture by finally going as dark as we can. The trick is to be very sparing with these extreme darks; only the darkest places, like the hair and beard shadows, and a few spots around the eyes and ears, really need them.

11 Add set details

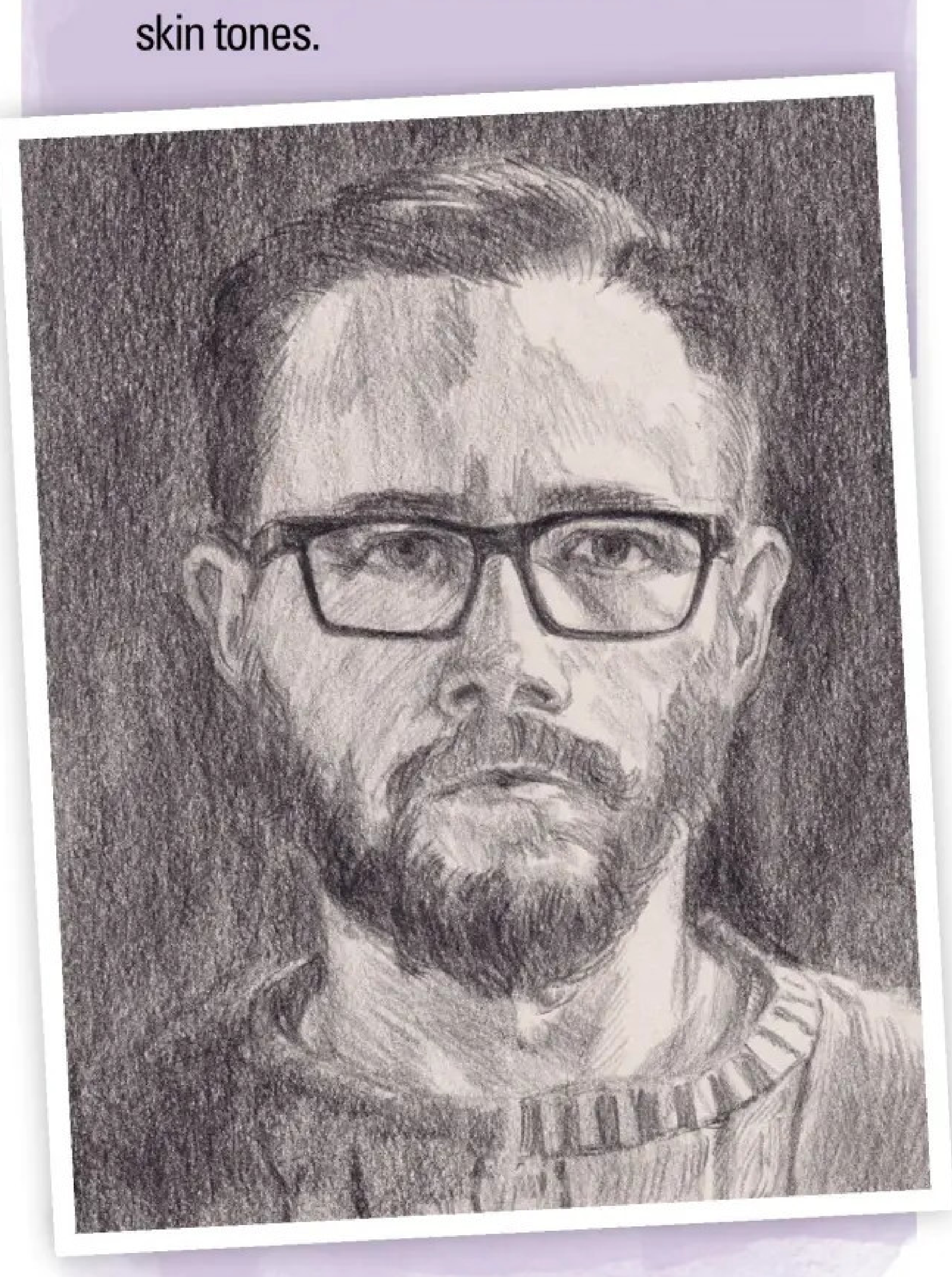
Here I have added the ribbing to the jumper – this looks fiddly, but I've intentionally been very sparing, and the detail falls off towards the edge of the image. As we move out from the centre, with the focus of the head and the hand, the details are less important. Adding them right up to the edge would risk cluttering the picture. This is a common portrait painting trick; an artist may draw focus in with a higher level of detail in the face, while taking care to imply the sitter's outfit and setting in broader brush strokes.



> "Putting in some extra time to adjust things can really push a portrait that extra mile"

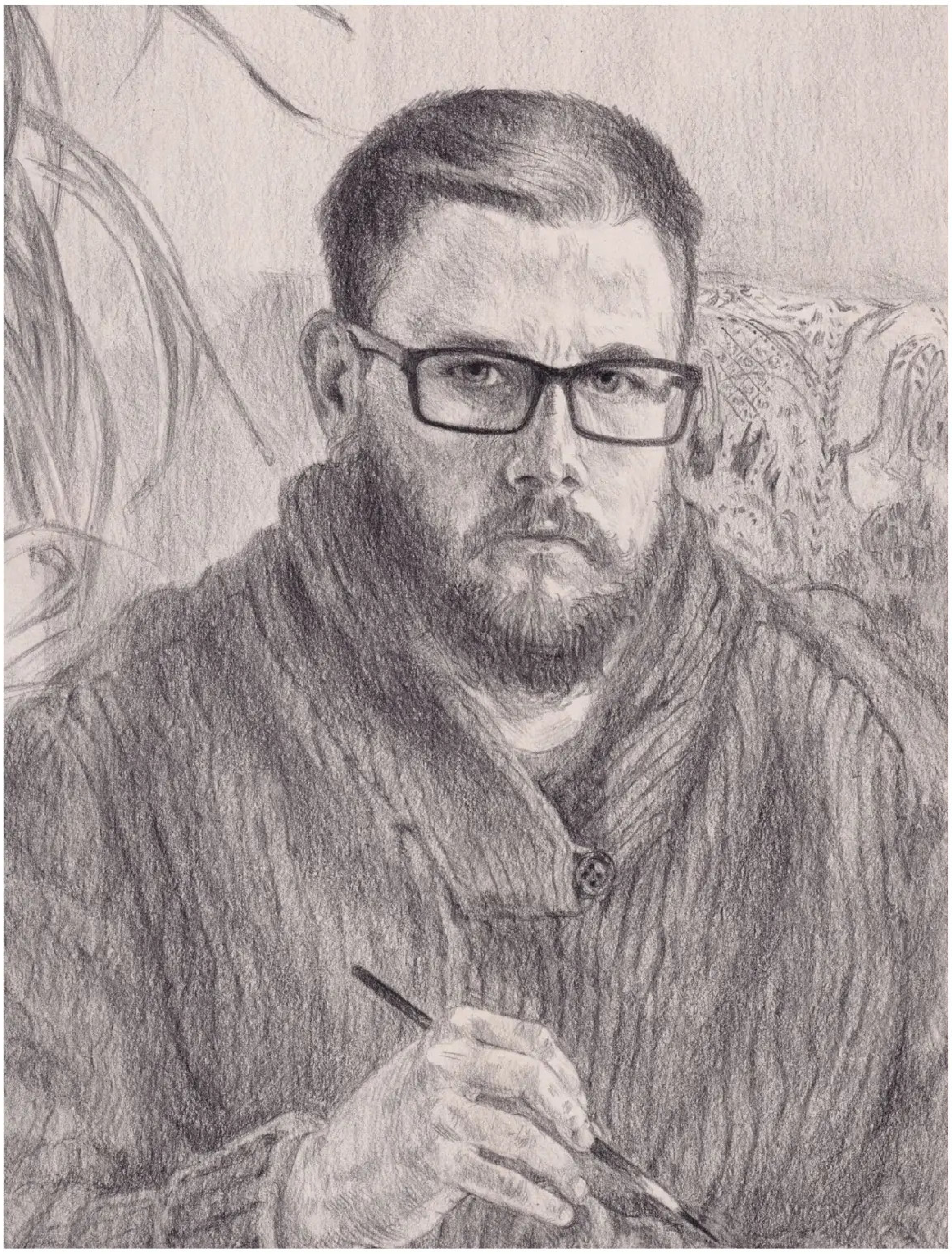
Backdrops and tone

Backgrounds change the overall feel of your portrait – here I have used a black background, so the shadows and hair blend into it. It gives us something to compare skin tones to – often I see students neglect to put a background in, then wrestle with dark skin tones.



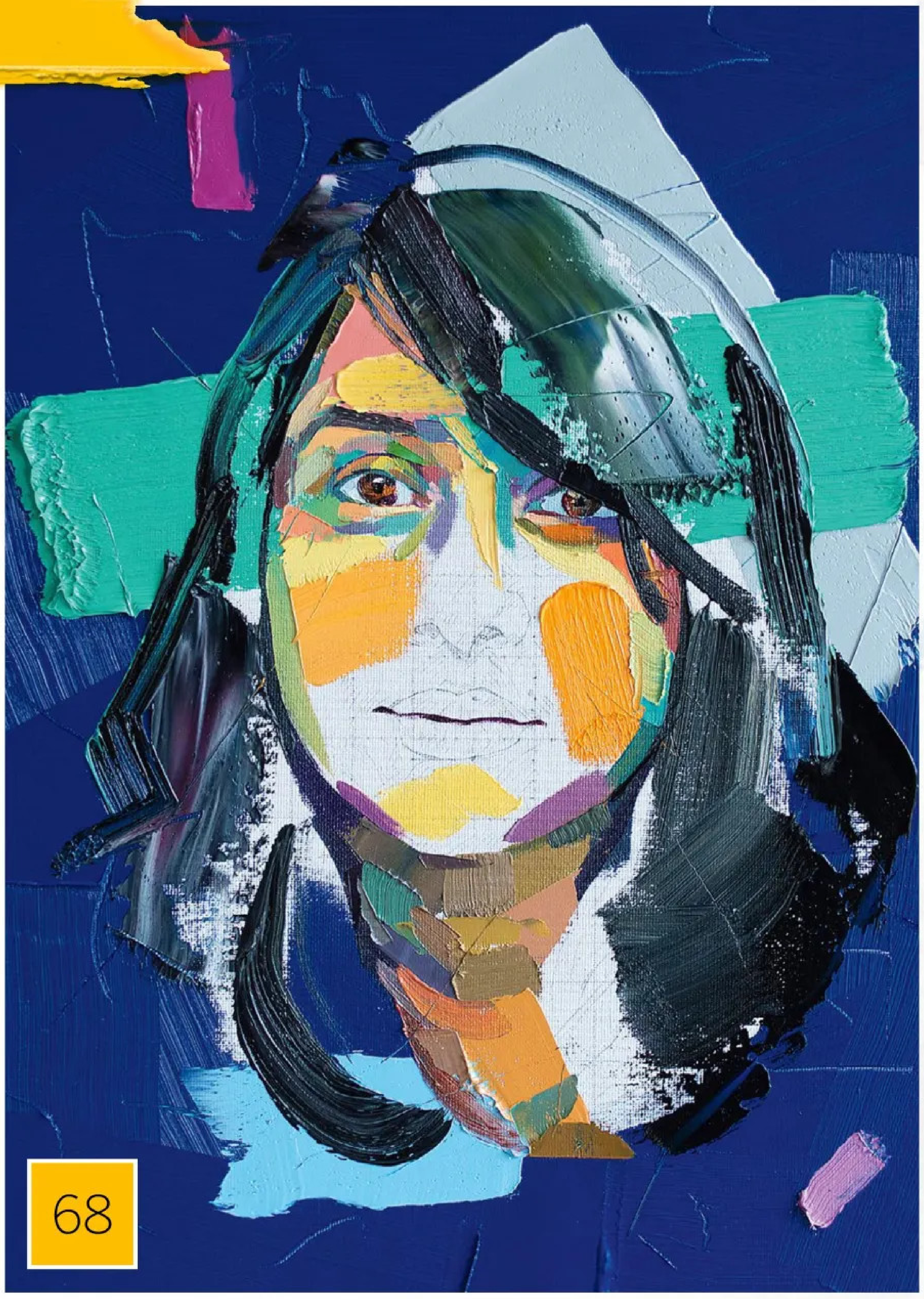
12 The final touches

In this final stage, I have gone through the entire picture to add details, and tweak a few things – including adding pattern to the chair, and darkening the shadows in the beard. Harder to notice are the edges on the hand, pencil, and around the eyes. These have been adjusted so they look tighter, and clearer to an observer. I've also softened the hairline. Not big changes, but they add up! Putting in some extra time to adjust things can really push a portrait that extra mile.

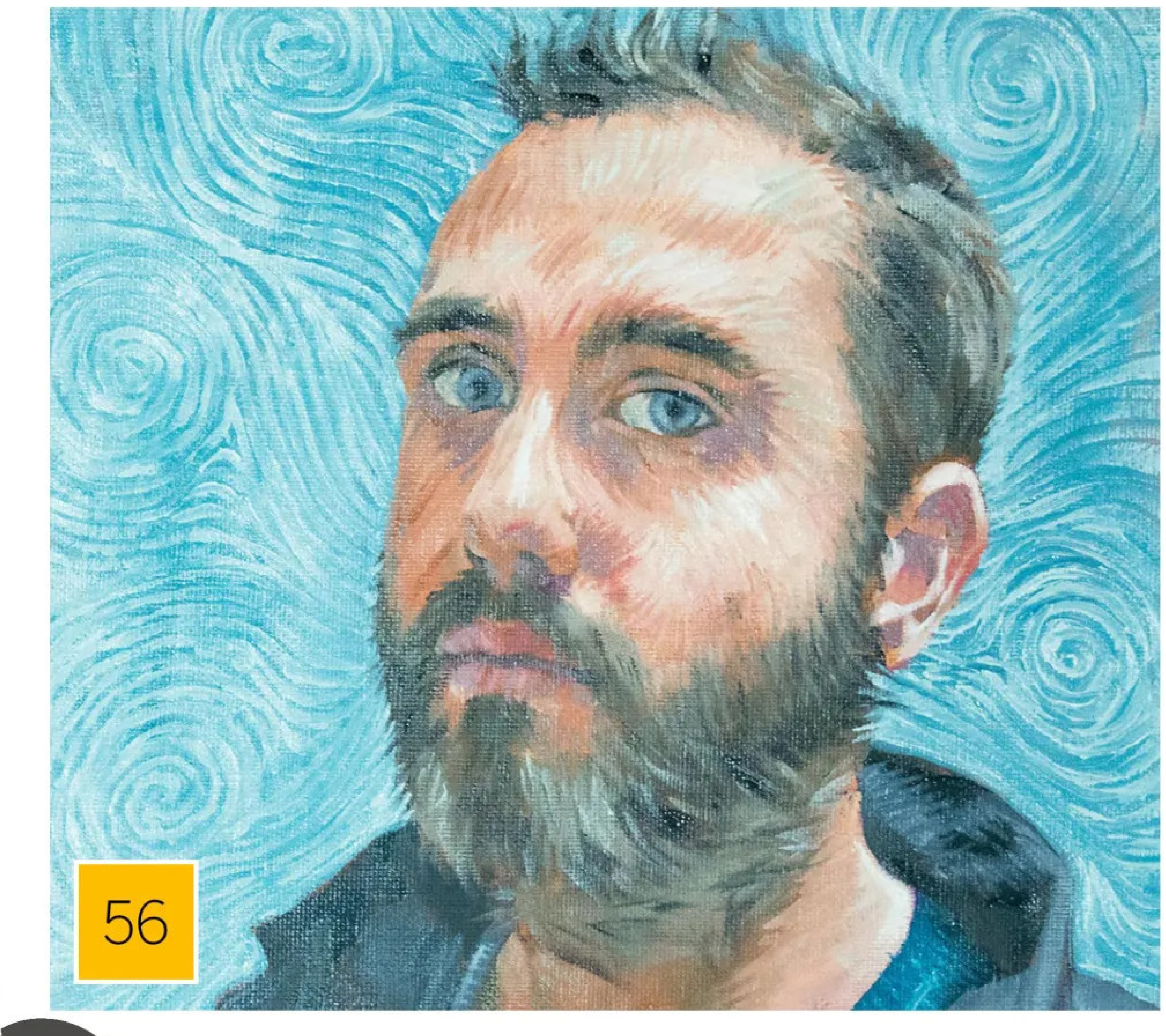


Tutorials

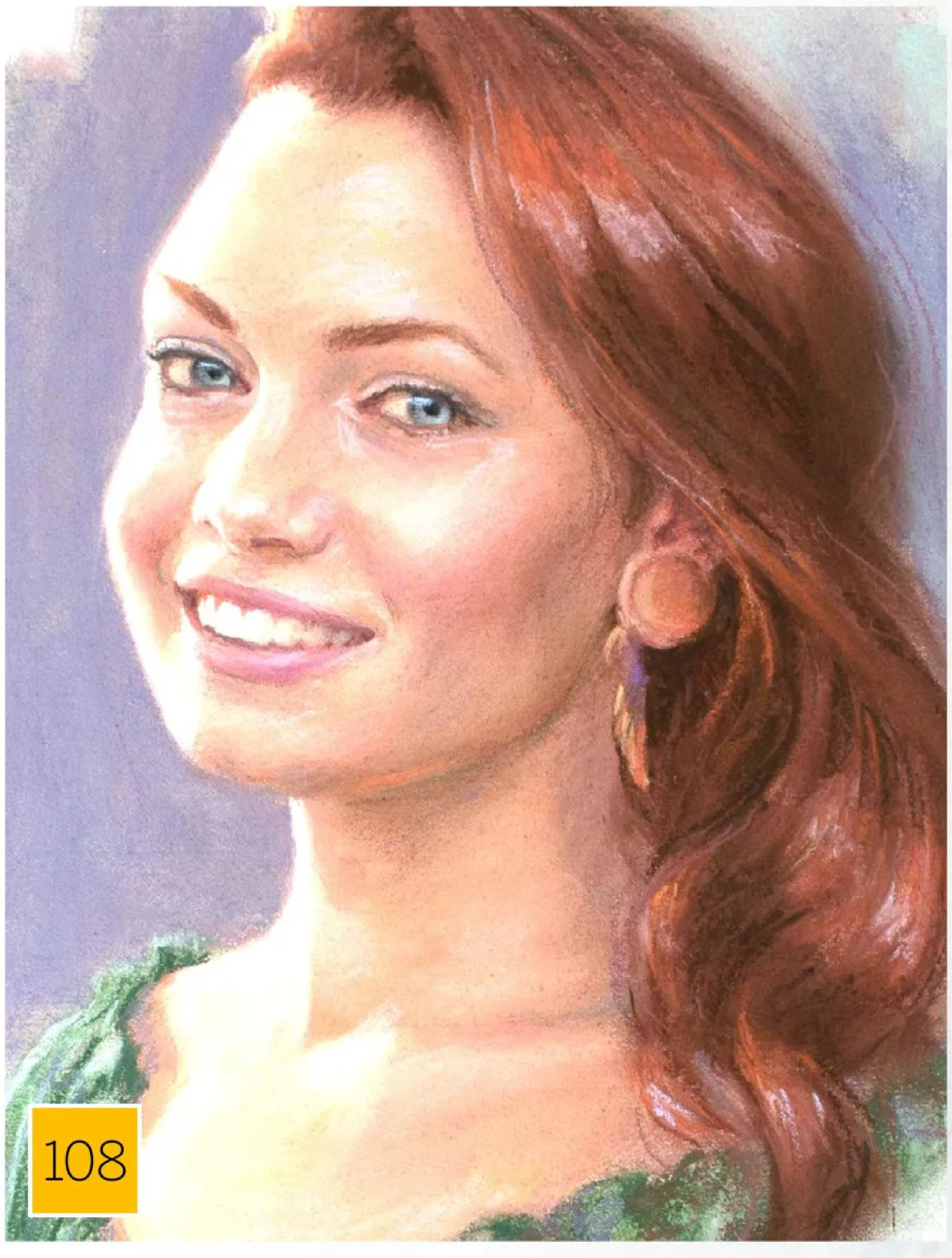
50 Going simple with gouache
56 Paint like Van Gogh
62 Get creative with acrylics
68 Experiment with colour for dynamic oil portraits
76 Capture movement
80 Working with a limited palette
86 Emotive portraits in watercolour
94 Create more interesting skin tones with acrylics
98 Paint like Caravaggio
104 How to paint a nose
108 Create striking portraits
116 How to paint realistic eyes
120 Paint a classically inspired portrait



68



56



108

86

GARDNER

Going simple with gouache

Stephen Gardner creates a portrait in gouache using complementary colours

Materials

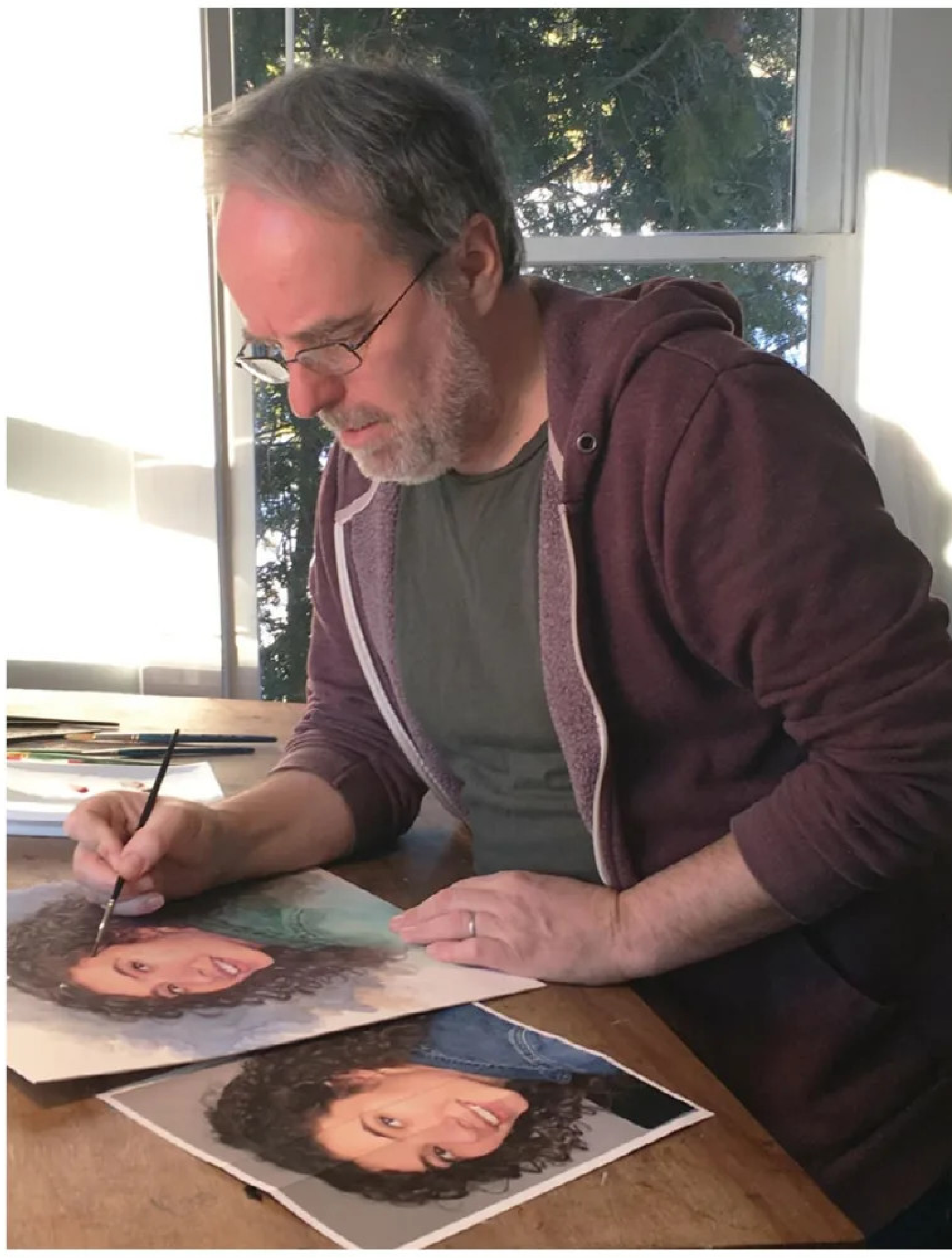
When working with complementary colours I mix enough warms and cools, and lights and darks to see me through a painting. I also use a small amount of Ultramarine Blue at the end to create the grey background.

- ☐ Gouache paint in: Marigold Yellow; Cadmium Red; Primary Red; Bengal Rose; Perylene Violet; Winsor Green; Viridian Green; Oxide of Chromium; Sap Green; Ultramarine Blue
- ☐ Acrylic gesso
- ☐ CP illustration board
- ☐ Round brushes: No 2, 4, 6, 10
- ☐ Graphite pencil (HB)

About STEPHEN

New York, US

Stephen moved to New York in 1989 from the UK. He has painted over 250 book covers for major publishing houses, and continues to work as both an illustrator and a professor.
www.gardnerillustration.com



Whenever I start a new painting I always use a complementary colour palette (i.e opposite colours on the colour wheel), specifically reds and greens. I find there is a tremendous range of colour to be found in such a simple palette.

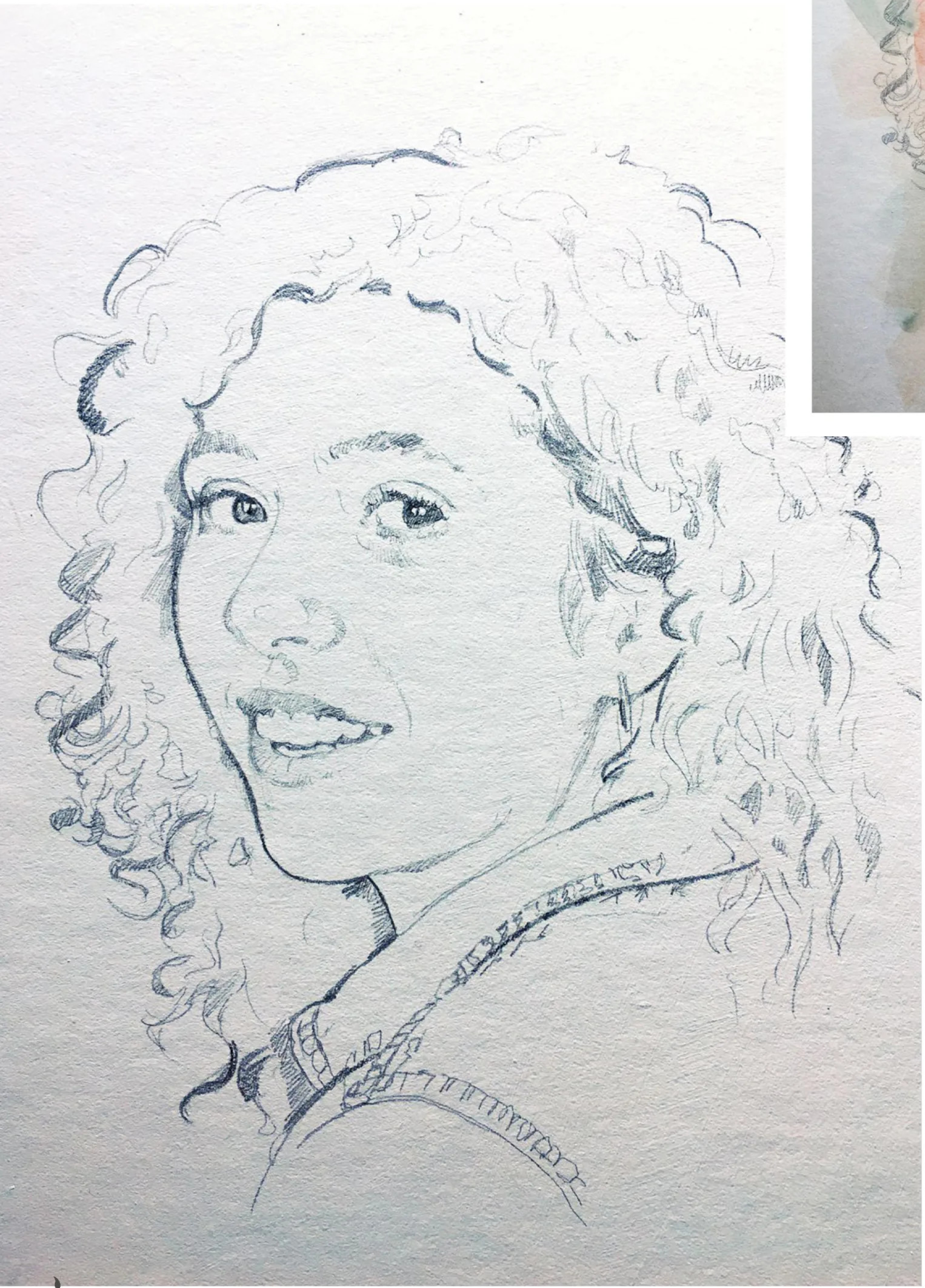
I built on this technique while teaching, as I wanted to give my students a simple approach to creating a portrait.

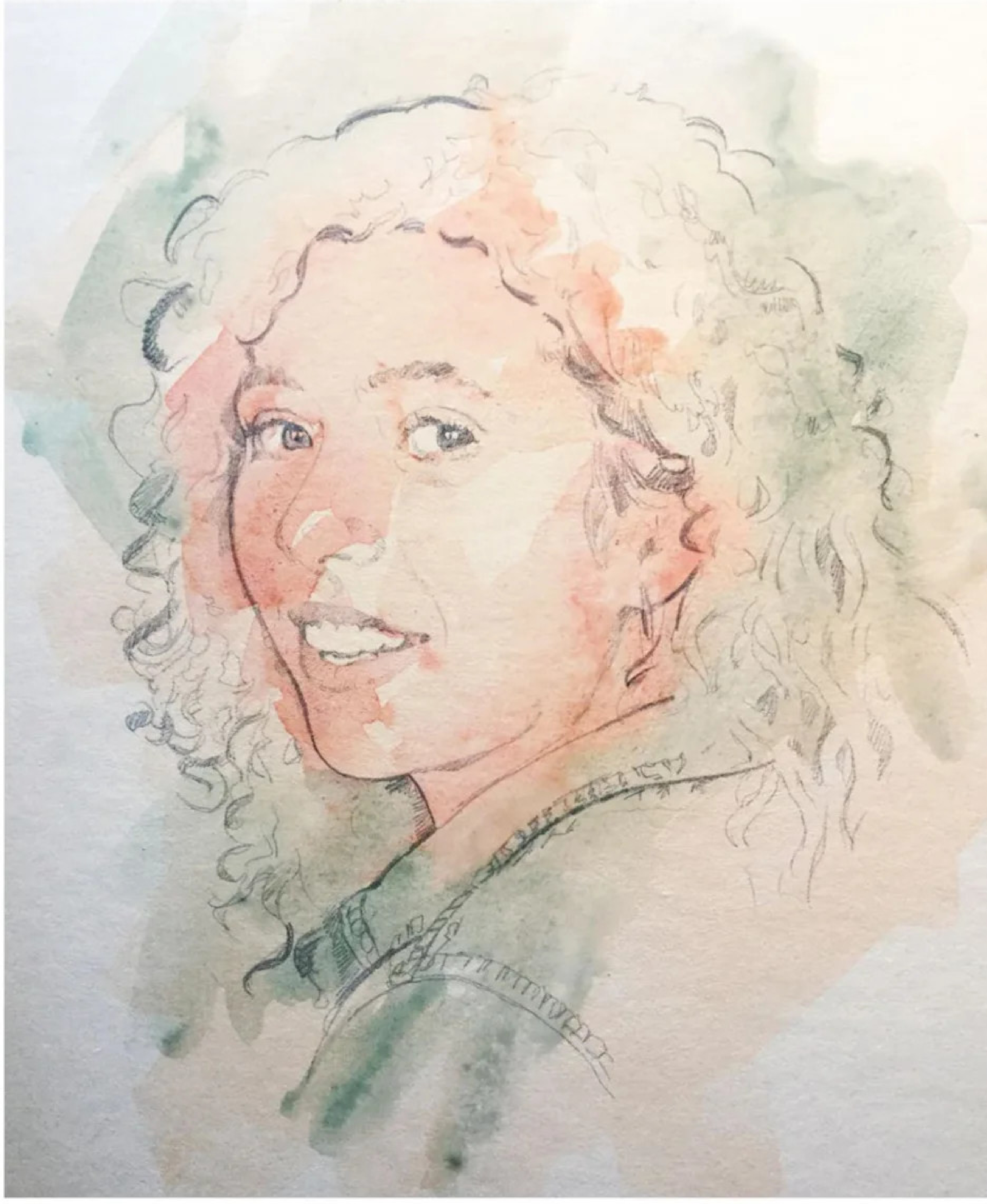
I paint in gouache (an opaque watercolour), and use round brushes in sizes 2, 4, 6 and 10. The important thing with these brushes is to ensure they have a sharp point, so that it's easy to paint details. The point of a brush is like the point of a pencil. Talking of which, it's essential to start your painting with a pencil drawing using a strong reference, like a photo – you will need it throughout the painting process.

I usually paint on cold-press illustration board, to which I apply a thin layer of acrylic gesso to the surface (as well as to the back of it). This creates a more stable surface and allows paint to be removed at any stage – some student painters are terrified of making mistakes, so knowing you can lift the paint off gives them some solace.

1 Get the drawing right

Make sure you have a strong drawing to work from. Use a hard pencil, such as an F or 2H. If you use a soft pencil like 2B or 4B, you will wash the drawing away with your first application of paint. You want your pencil-work to be bold, as you will be looking for the drawing as you continue to layer the paint.



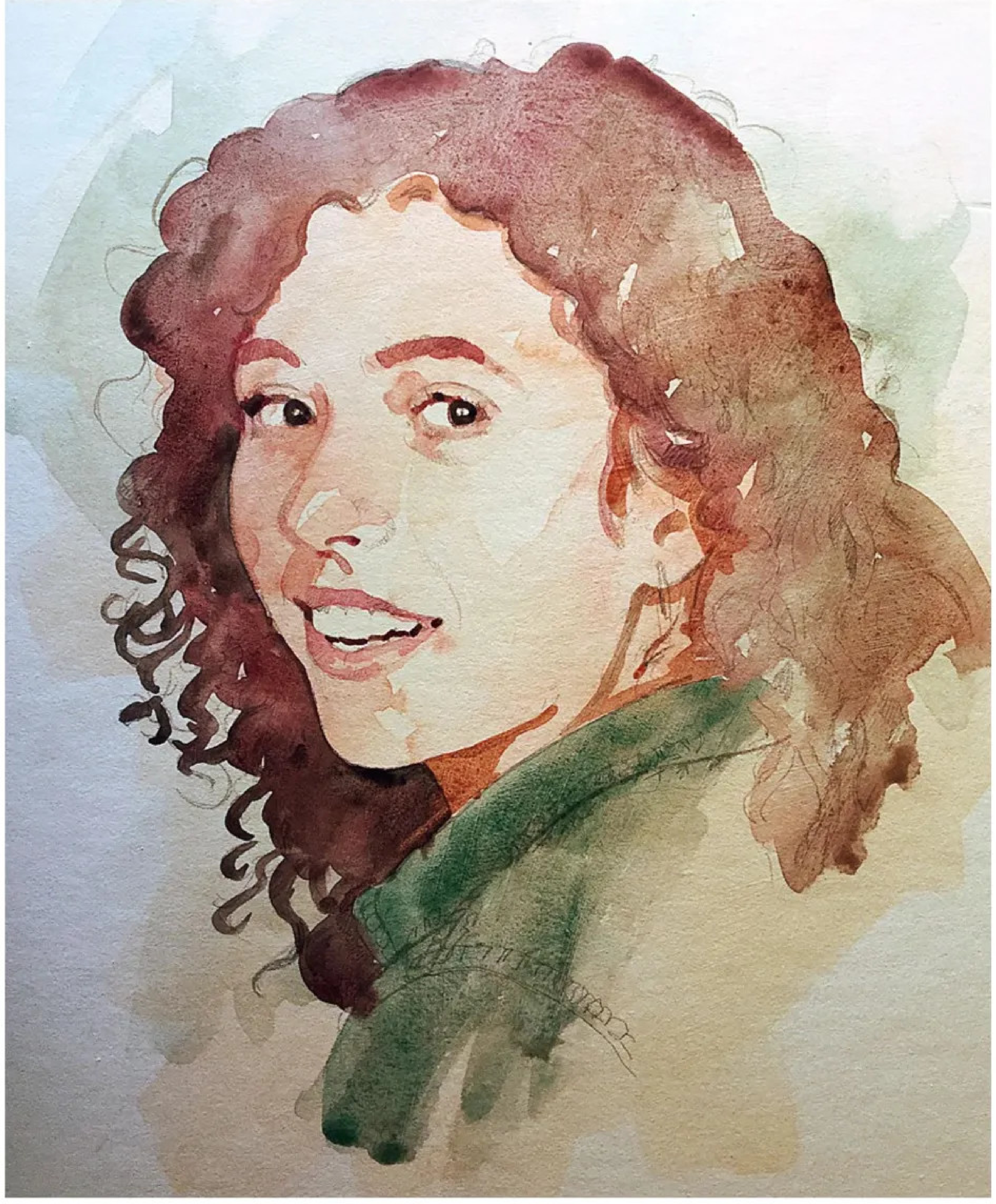


2 Lay the initial colour

Using a palette of reds and greens, I put down transparent layers of paint. Starting with a large brush (no 10), I broadly lay down the initial colour. I'm looking to create a flesh colour for the face, which in this case is a mix of Cadmium Red and Oxide of Chromium (green). I'm working to a mid-value base.

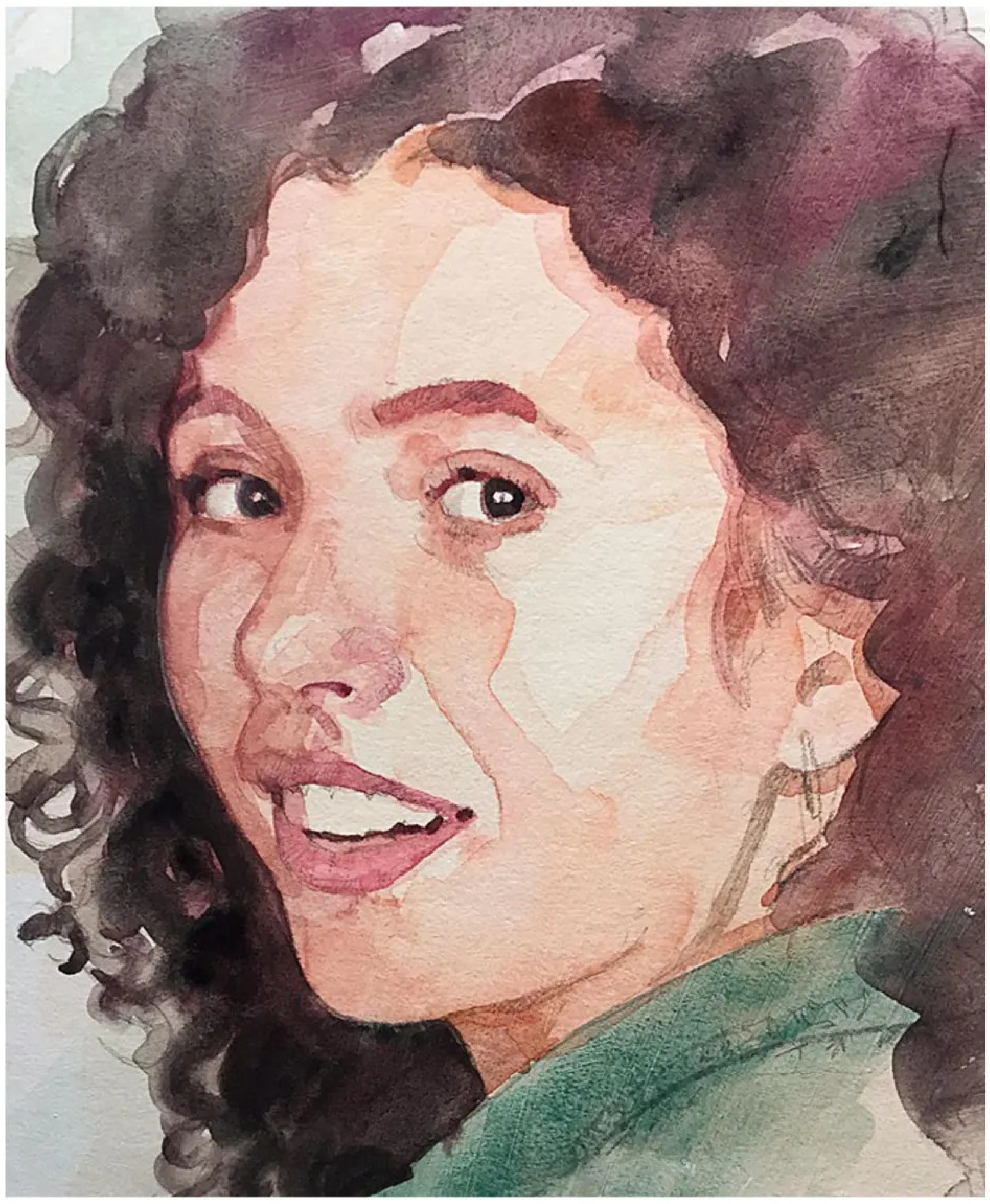
Eyes down!

A good tip when portrait painting is to centre one eye on the board or canvas. It helps create a more dramatic composition. Another tip I use is to make one eye more dominant, in terms of focus. These tips I got from a truly wonderful book called *The Art Spirit* by Robert Henri. Take my advice, buy it and read it (you can thank me later).



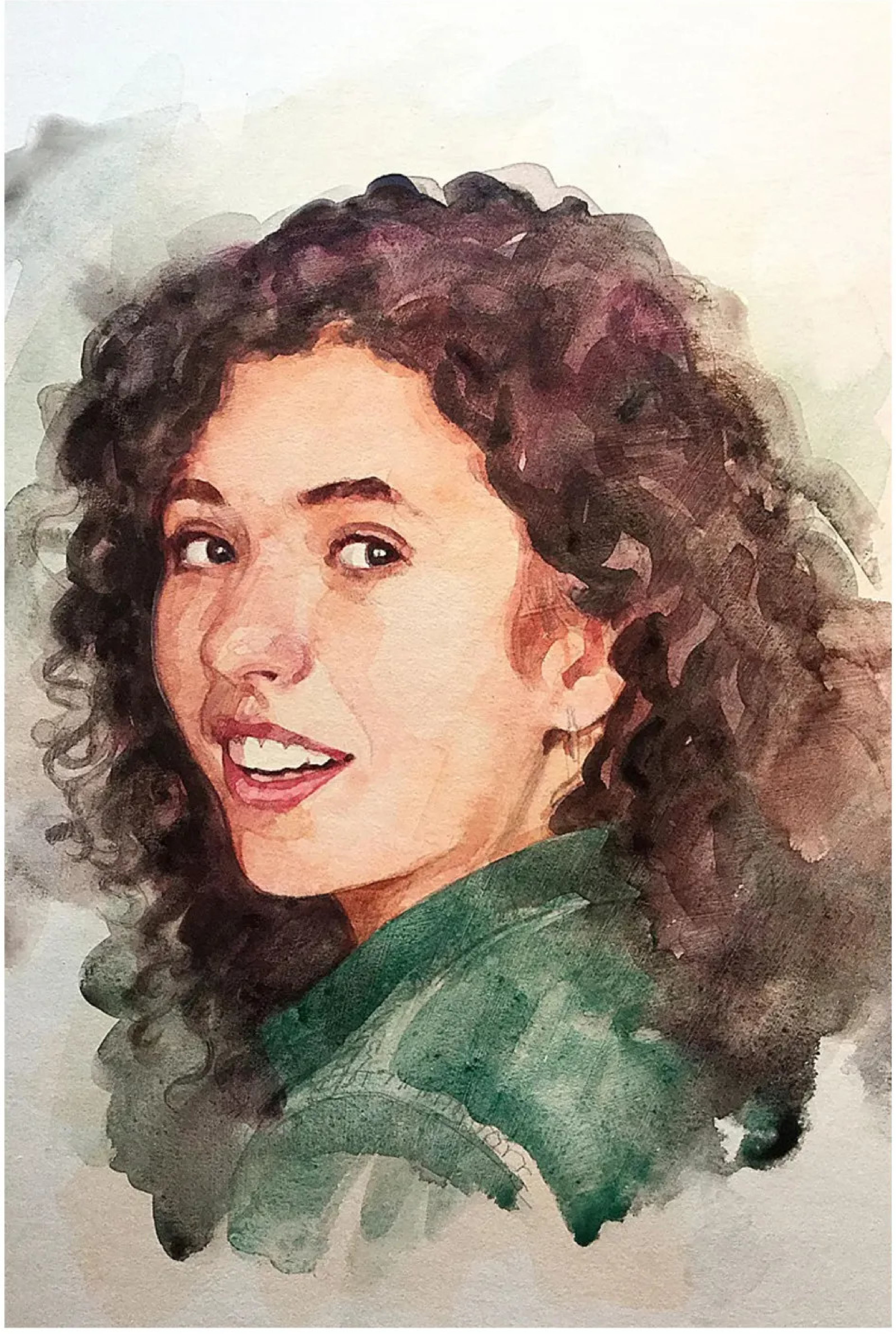
3 ◀ Let the layers dry

Gouache dries quickly, so I let each layer dry before applying the next. It's a good idea to apply each layer as directly as you can – if you scrub the brush repeatedly over an area, you will only pick up the paint from the first layer. Having said that, the ability to pick up the paint will come in handy at a later stage…



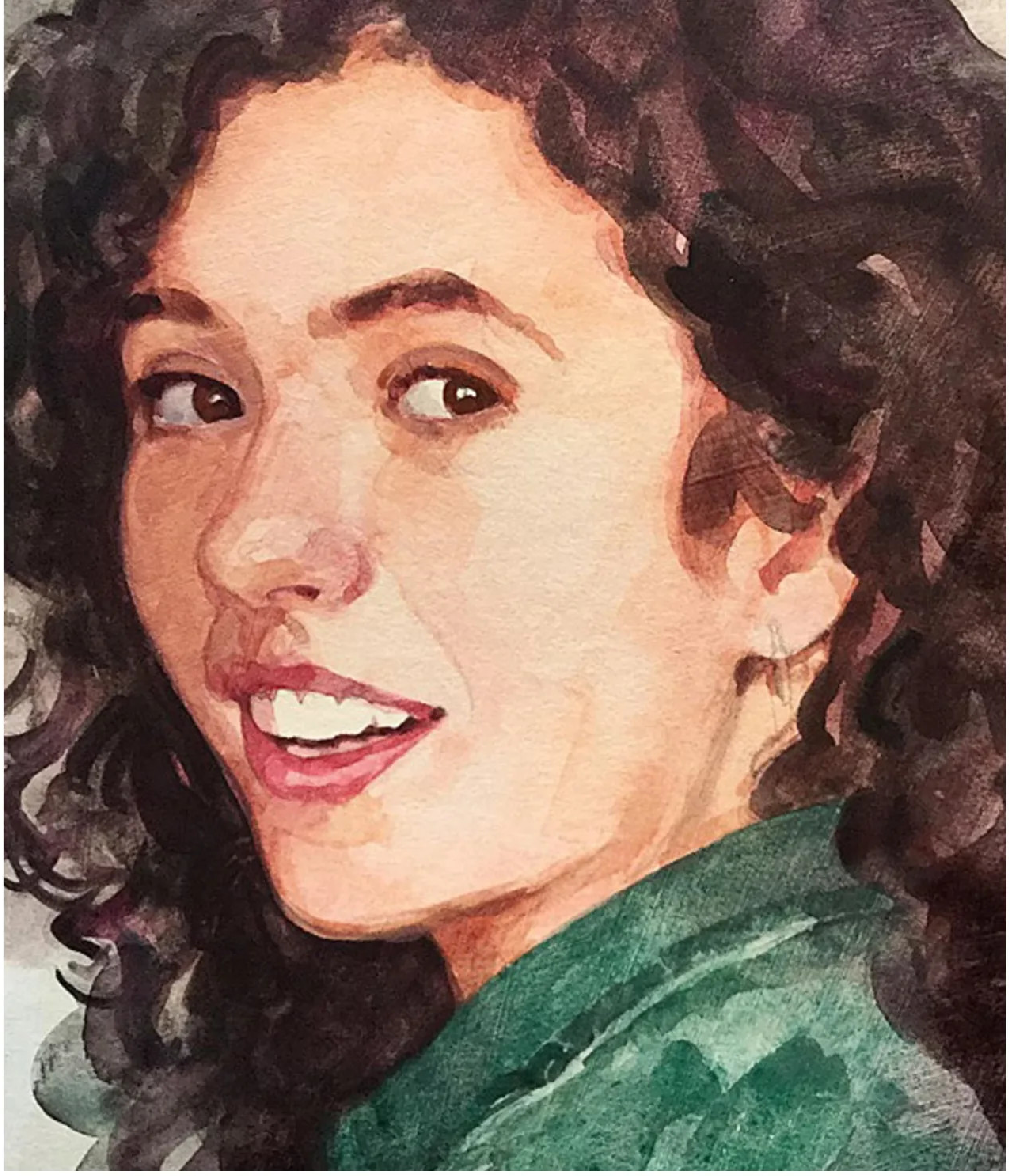
4 ▲ Add in detail

I continue to increase the values as I go, getting darker and darker. Using a smaller brush, the no 2, I start to fill in the smaller details of the eyes, mouth and nose. It's important to hold onto the drawing at every step. You need to see the face smiling back at you as you go.



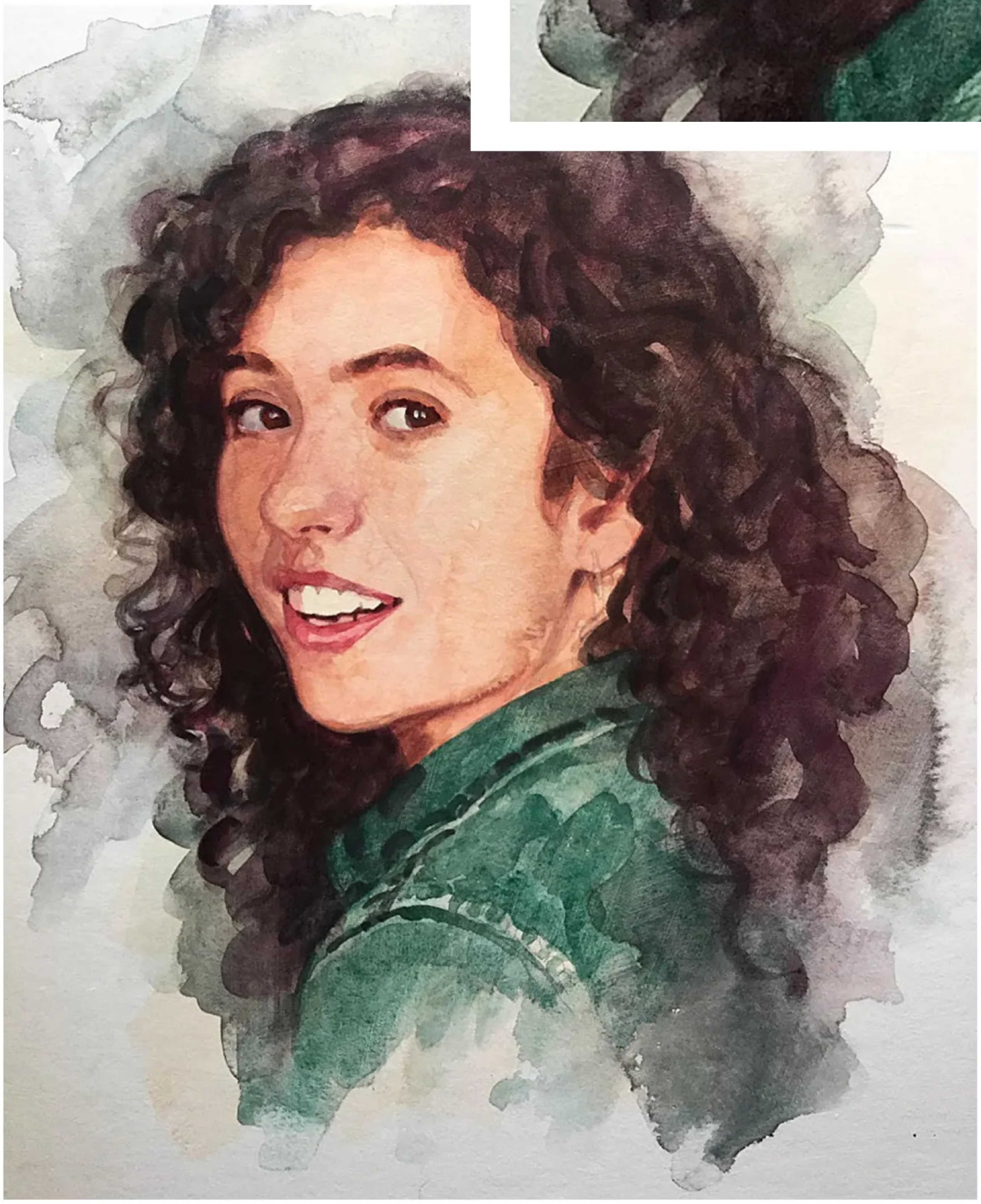
5 ◀ Build on the painting

As I darken the value of the hair around the face, it enables me to increase the depth of the values of the skin tones. Once again, I am building the entire painting as I go, not concentrating on a single area. As you see here, the painting could be considered finished, even at this stage.



6 Get your whites right

I'm still pushing the dark values of the hair around the face, as well as defining the curls. I've also darkened the whites of the eyes, which is an important observation to make. The whites of the eyes are never actually white. Note that the teeth also change in value as they recede into the mouth.

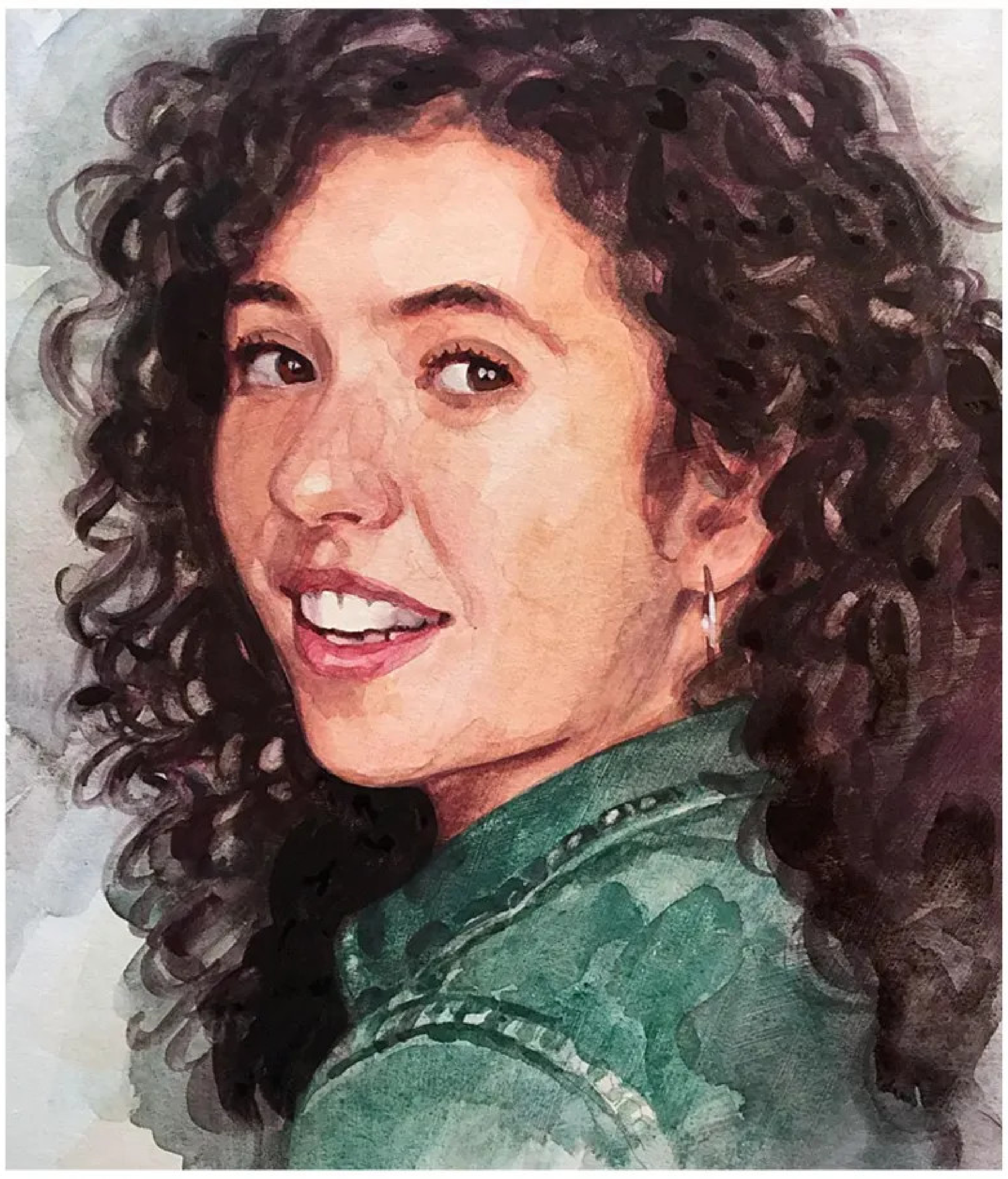


7 Soften the edges

Here I'm working of softening some transitions. I'm putting a mid value in the background and softening the hair into it. The eye automatically jumps to areas of high contrast and sharp edges. The main focal point of this painting is the centered eye, as you see here – it's the area of both the highest contrast and the sharpest edges. Hair should always be painted as softly as possible. I soften the transition as the hair meets both the face and the background.

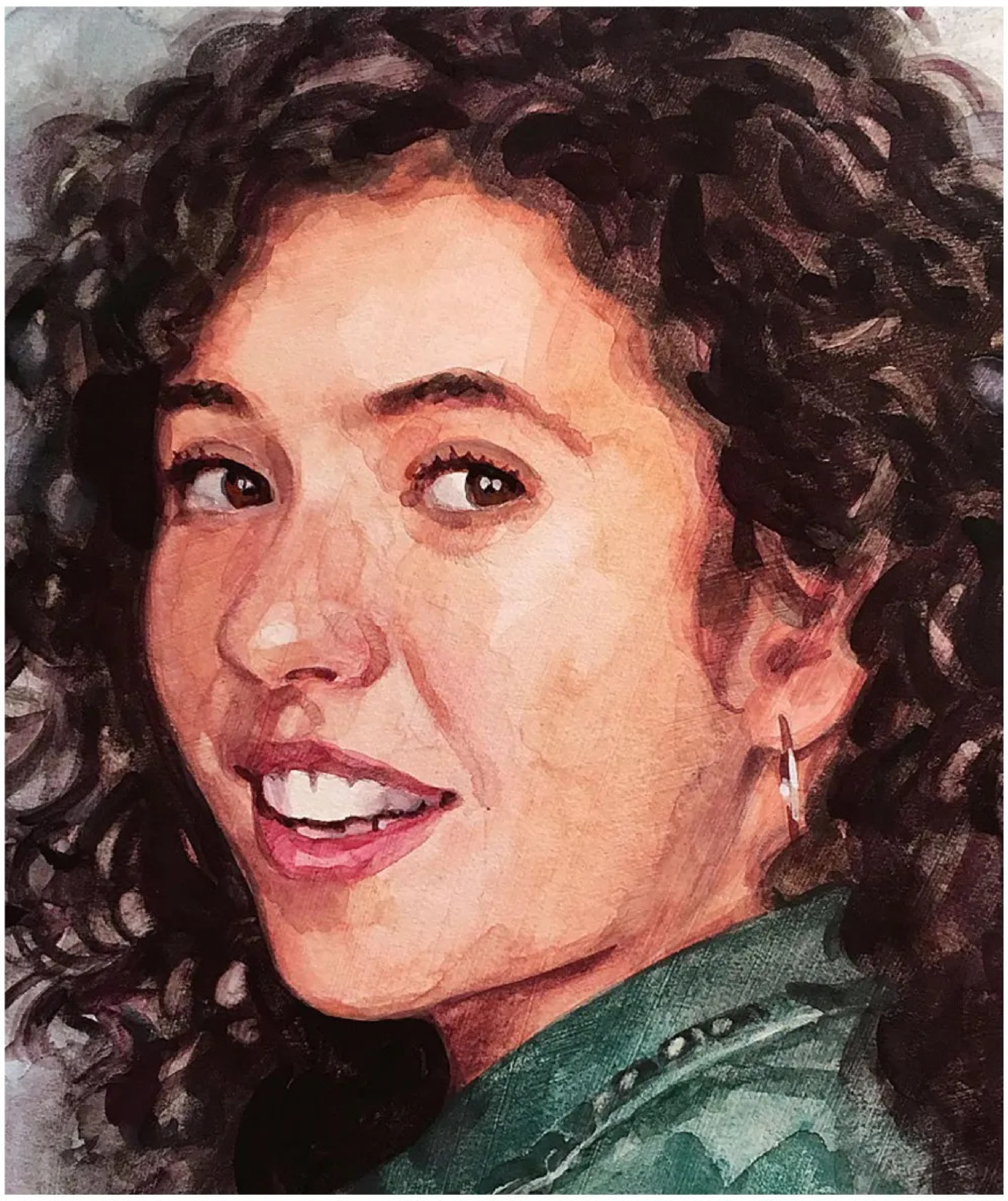
Keep it natural

A good piece of reference is essential, take your own photographs (if possible) and paint somebody you really like. Natural lighting is very important – using a flash will lose the detail and make a boring image.



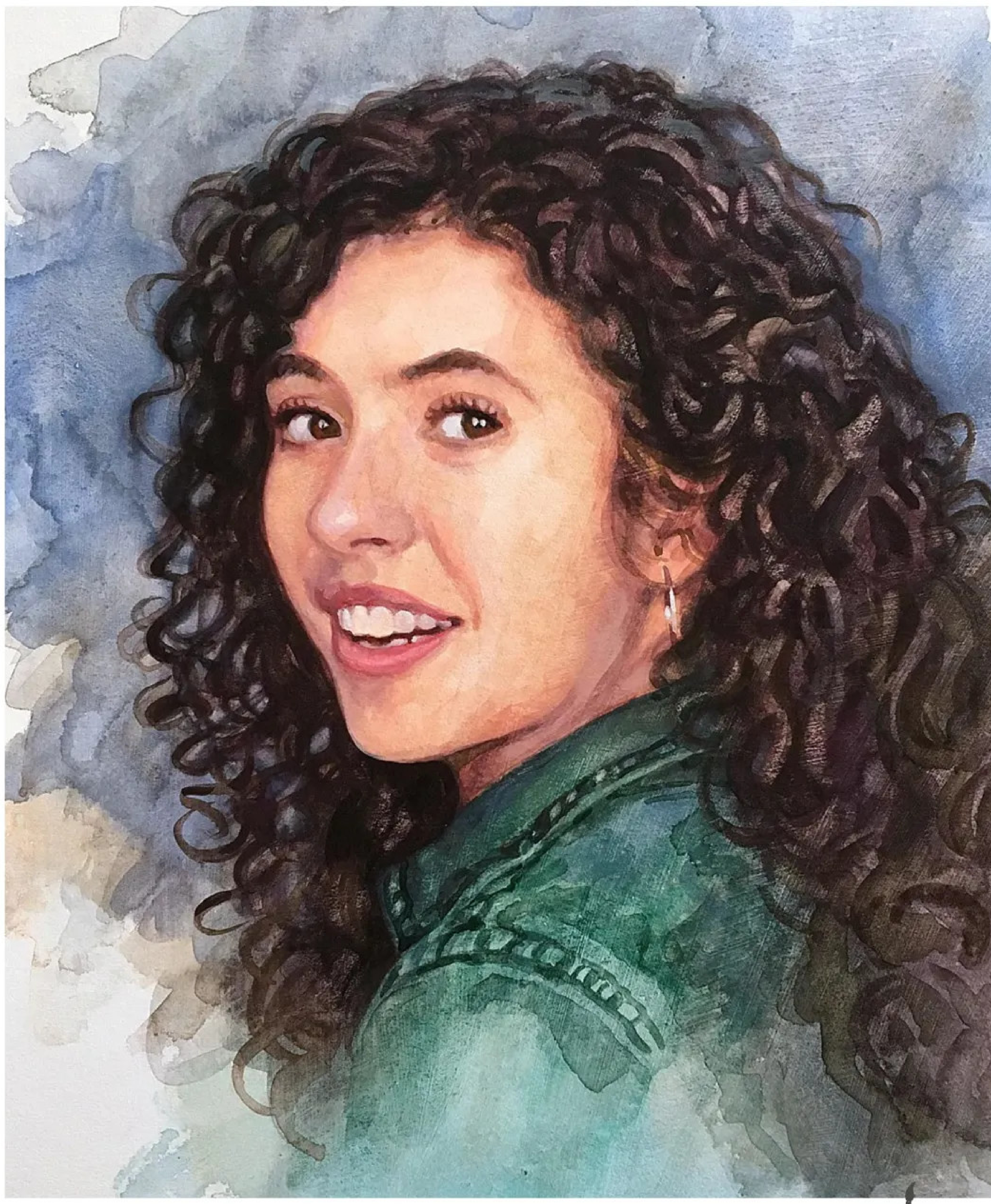
8 Lift out highlights

I'm now starting to look at the hair more closely, picking out the highlights. This is achieved by painting water onto the areas I want to lighten, then dabbing it with a paper towel. This is where the gesso surface comes into its own, as it means you can lift paint to create highlights or correct paint that might have gone too dark. As I continue, I work on the nose, keeping the paint a little pinker with a touch of Bengal Rose. No matter what your reference might suggest, paint the nostrils with a warm red hue – the nose, eyelids and mouth all contain blood vessels close to the surface that should always appear warm in colour.



9 Nailing the values

I'm putting in the darkest parts of the hair and face now – it's the final push in terms of values. I look for the darker tones on the side of the face and around the mouth, trying to capture each little change in value that I see. This will increase the depth around the eyes. I pick up the details of the eyelashes and also the hoop earring. I use opaque white paint to capture the highlights.



10 The final touches

I lighten the right cheek by lifting the paint – brushing with water and dabbing at it with a paper towel, as before. This last stage is all about softening transitions and working final details. Some of the harder edges that happen with the initial paint washes can be softened by using a damp brush and blending. It can be hard to know when a painting is finished, I have often been accused of missing good stopping places. Some paintings I leave loose, while others I render until the cows come home. Ultimately it's your choice.

Paint like Van Gogh

Rob Lunn reveals how to build up a self-portrait from initial charcoal sketch through to finished oil painting

Dutch post-impressionist Vincent Willem van Gogh created many self-portraits in his career, and some of them are not so obvious. For example, *Irises*, painted at the Saint Paul-de-Mausole asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in the last year before his death, is a perfect example. A white flower stands alone and defiant in this very moving painting.

The self-portrait can take many guises and gives the artist the opportunity to say something about who they are, what they are, and importantly, what and who they want to be. In this workshop we're going to go through the stages of developing a self-portrait from start to finish and also try and give it a hint of the great master, Vincent van Gogh.

About ROB LUNN

Bath, UK

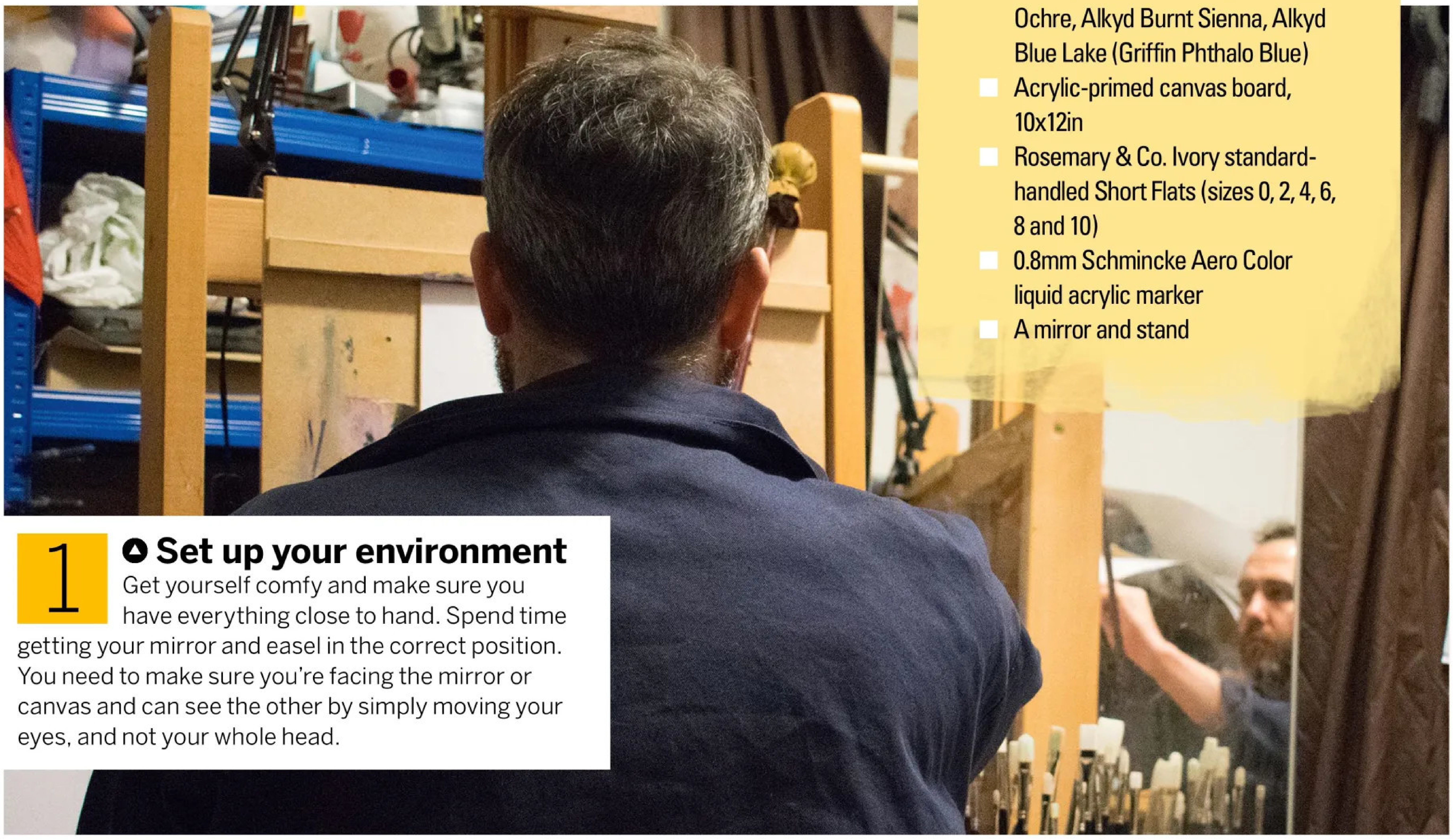
Rob is a self-taught painter, and loves to paint in oils. His influences are Vincent van Gogh, Caravaggio and Ilya Repin. He has taught art workshops since 2012.

www.roblunn.co.uk

Materials

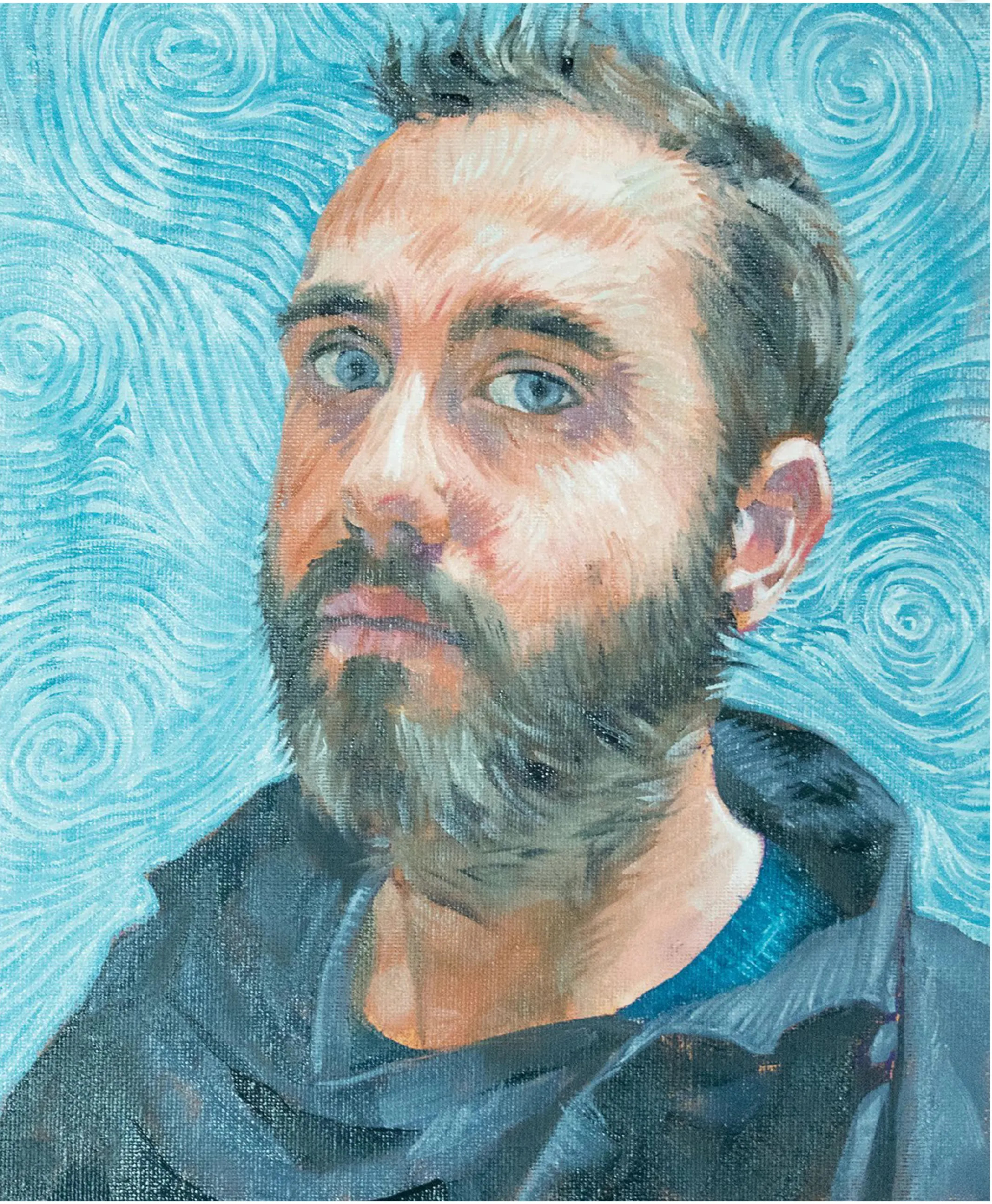
Rob has used the following colours because they offer "a good representation of the colour spectrum while retaining the most saturation when mixing".

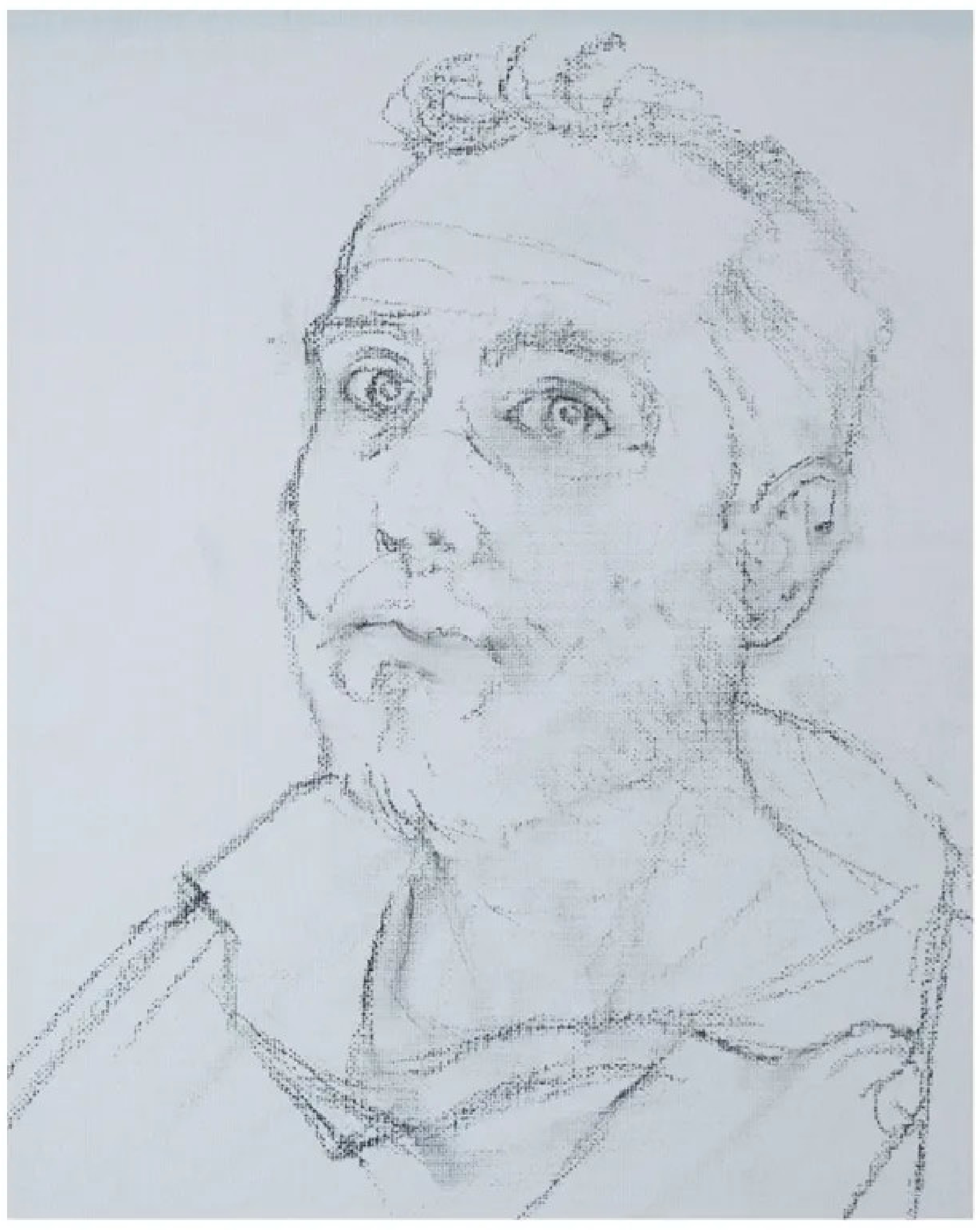
- ☐ Michael Harding oil paints: Ultramarine Blue, Blue Lake, Green Lake, Bright Green Lake, Bright Yellow Lake, Yellow Lake, Yellow Lake Deep, Permanent Orange, Scarlet Lake, Alizarin Crimson, Magenta, Ultramarine Violet, Titanium White, Yellow Ochre, Alkyd Burnt Sienna, Alkyd Blue Lake (Griffin Phthalo Blue)
- ☐ Acrylic-primed canvas board, 10x12in
- ☐ Rosemary & Co. Ivory standard-handled Short Flats (sizes 0, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10)
- ☐ 0.8mm Schmincke Aero Color liquid acrylic marker
- ☐ A mirror and stand



1 Set up your environment

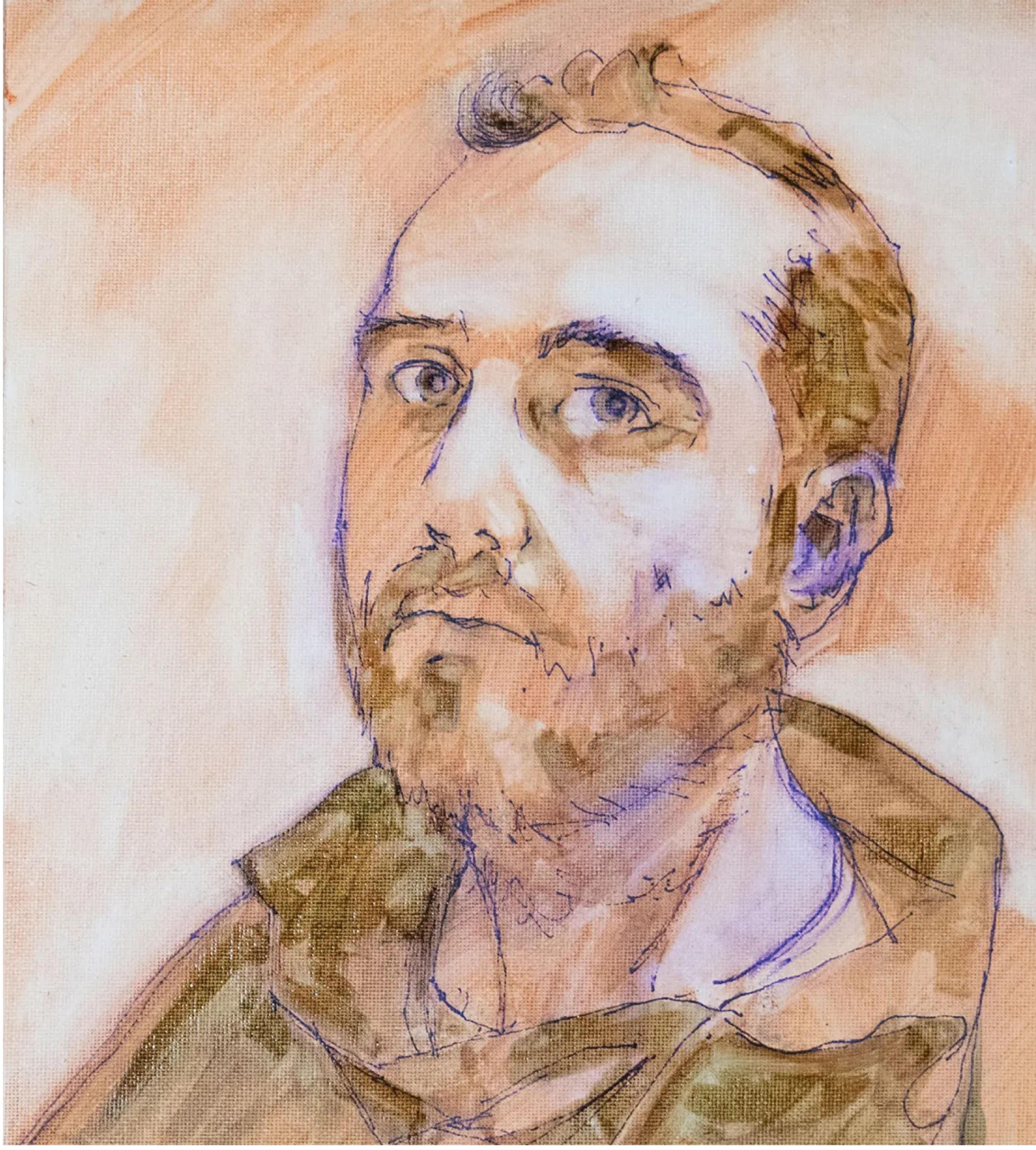
Get yourself comfy and make sure you have everything close to hand. Spend time getting your mirror and easel in the correct position. You need to make sure you're facing the mirror or canvas and can see the other by simply moving your eyes, and not your whole head.





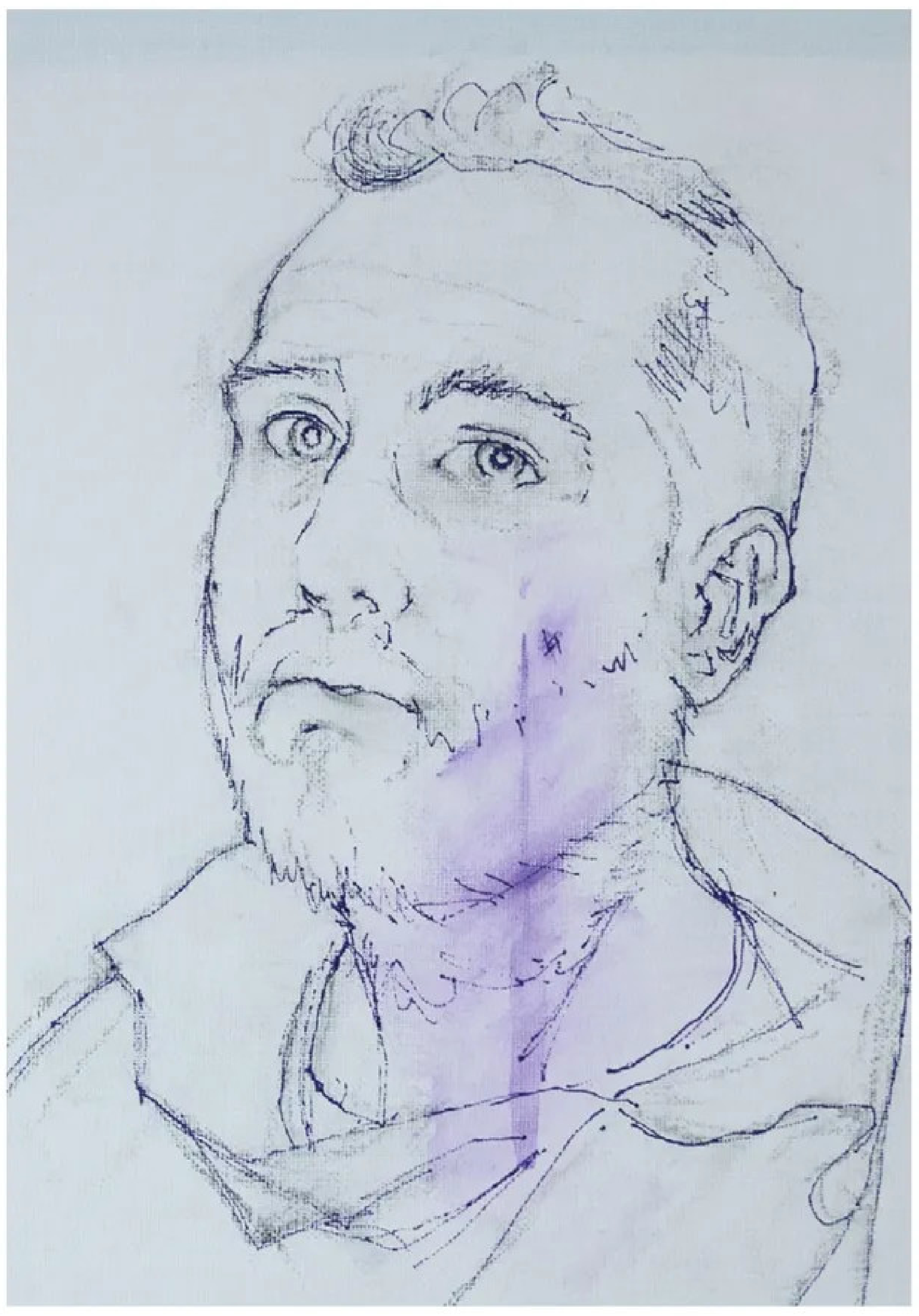
2 Charcoal sketch

Using a sharpened stick of willow charcoal start to sketch the main features in. Remember to begin with the larger forms and add increasing levels of detail as you go. This is just a dress rehearsal, so don't worry about adding form shadows. However, it'll be helpful to add the extreme edges of cast shadows at this stage.



3 Construction

I fix the drawing in place using a liquid acrylic marker. I've chosen a purple acrylic ink for my construction lines, but an earthy red or blue would work just as well. Just as long as the colour is dark enough to show through the tonal stage that's coming up next.



4 Tonal painting

Creating a tonal stage helps break down the painting process. When I'm thinking about tone, in this case Alkyd Burnt Sienna thinned down with a little bit of turps, I'm not thinking about colour at all. I'm just concentrating on tone, which I'll use as a guide when I get to releasing the colour later.

Sketching the shadows

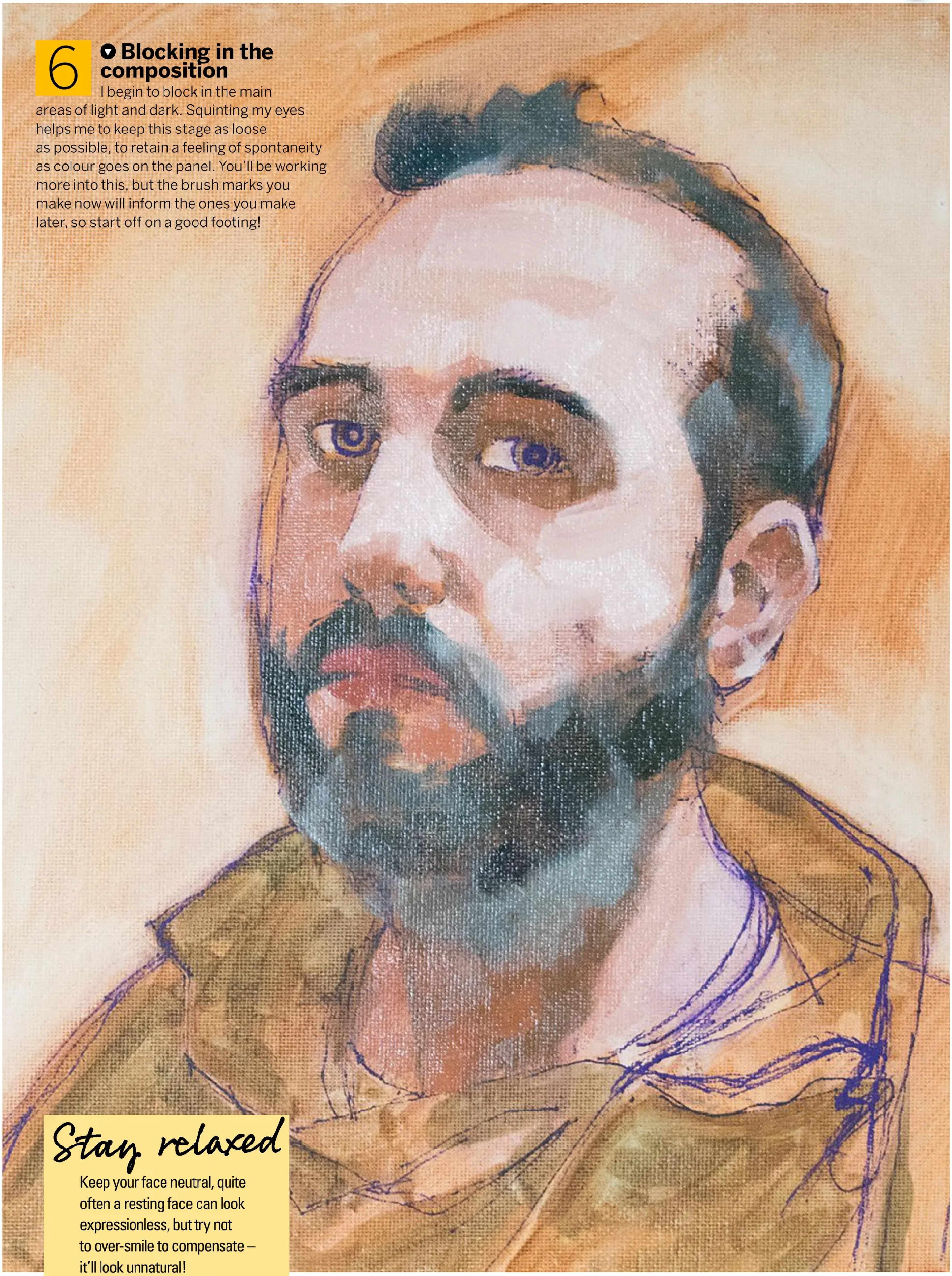
Adding cast shadows in your charcoal sketches can help map out where things go, but don't worry about form shadows: you'll create these in the tonal stage.

5 Pre-mix colours

I start by mixing a base tone for my skin using Yellow Ochre and Scarlet Lake, along with a touch of Green Lake to knock the scarlet back. This orange-brown is then lightened for skin tones and darkened for shadows. I also mix my own black from Alizarin Crimson, Blue Lake and Bright Yellow Lake and create greys to mix with the skin tones.

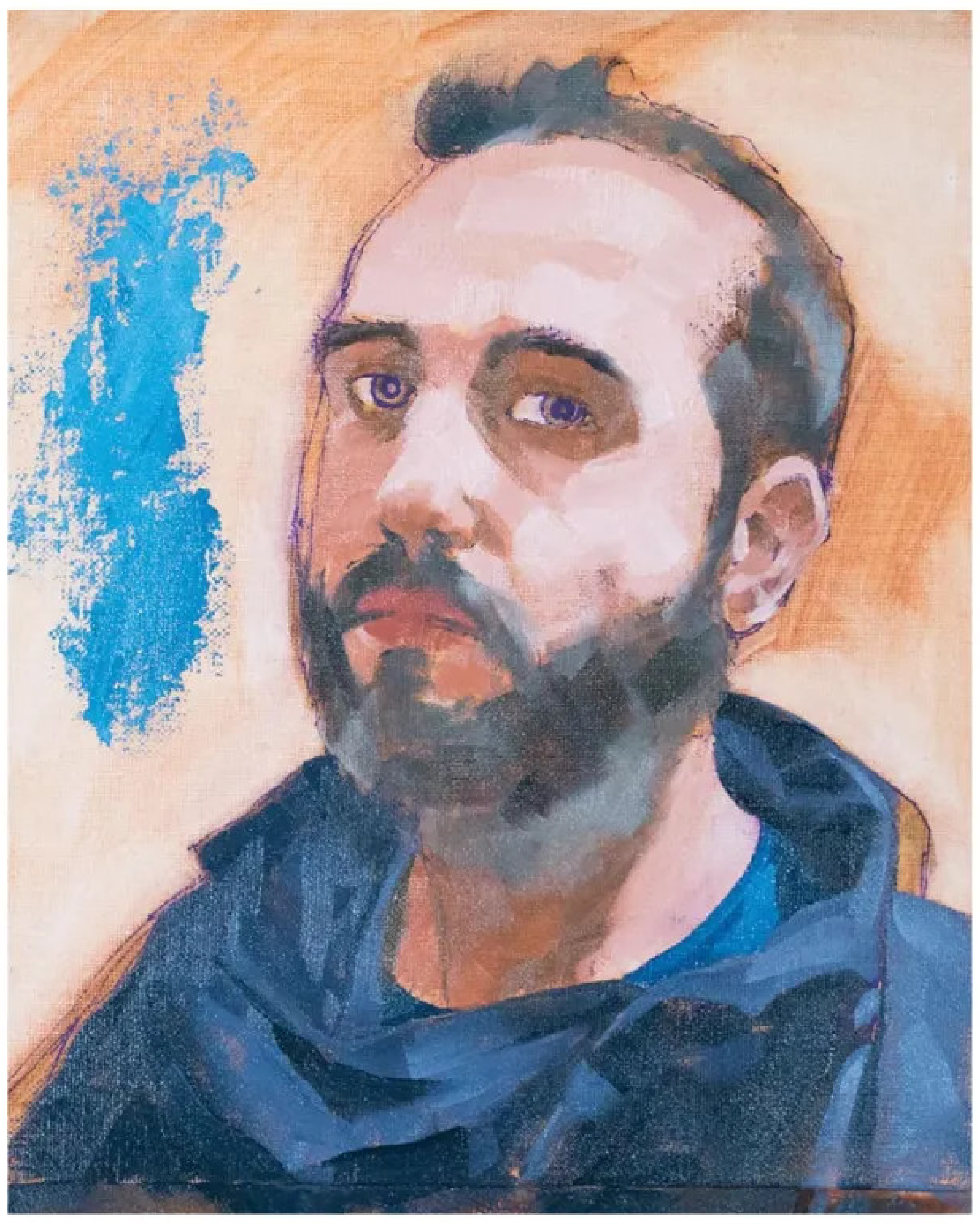
6 Blocking in the composition

I begin to block in the main areas of light and dark. Squinting my eyes helps me to keep this stage as loose as possible, to retain a feeling of spontaneity as colour goes on the panel. You'll be working more into this, but the brush marks you make now will inform the ones you make later, so start off on a good footing!



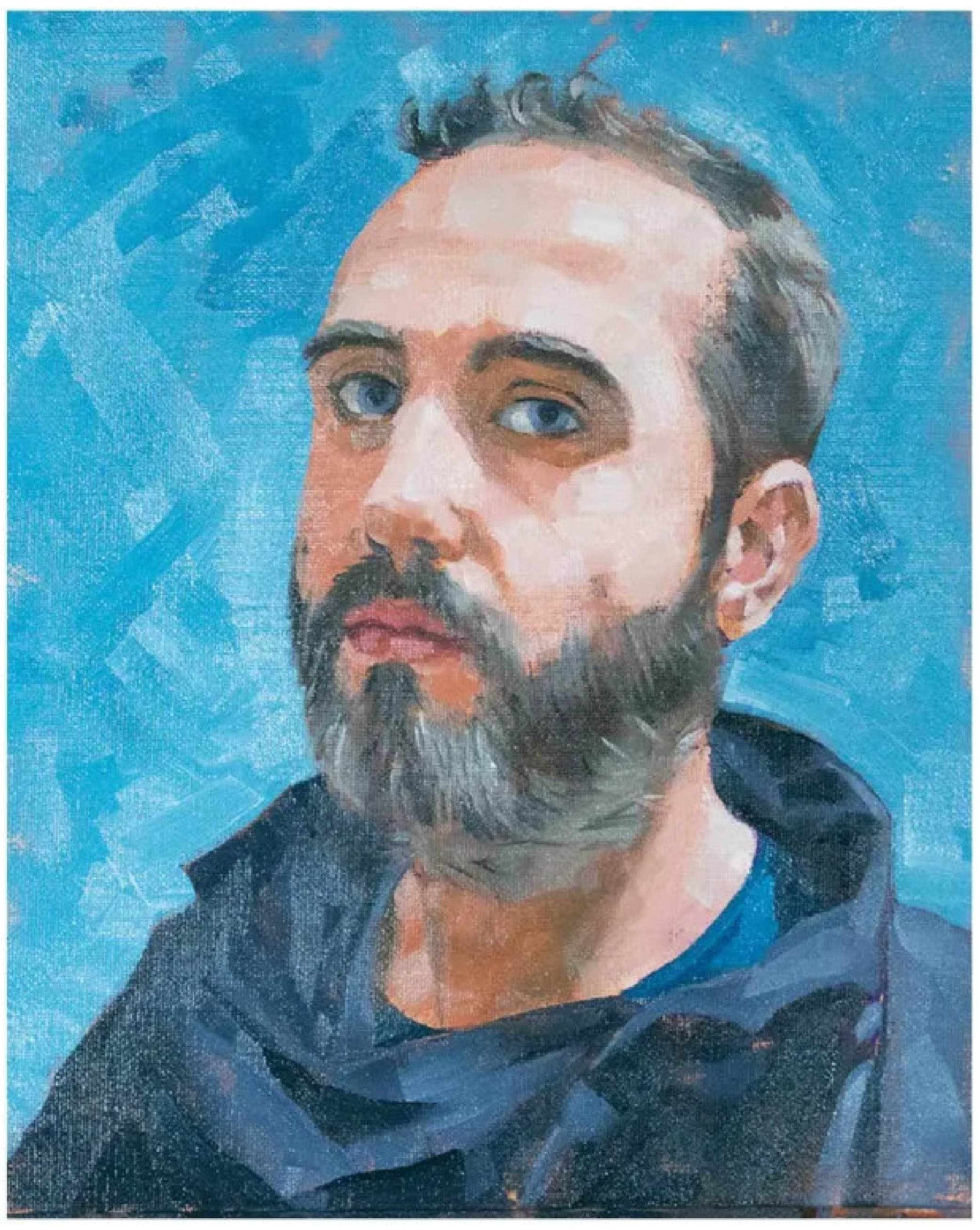
Stay relaxed

Keep your face neutral, quite often a resting face can look expressionless, but try not to over-smile to compensate – it'll look unnatural!



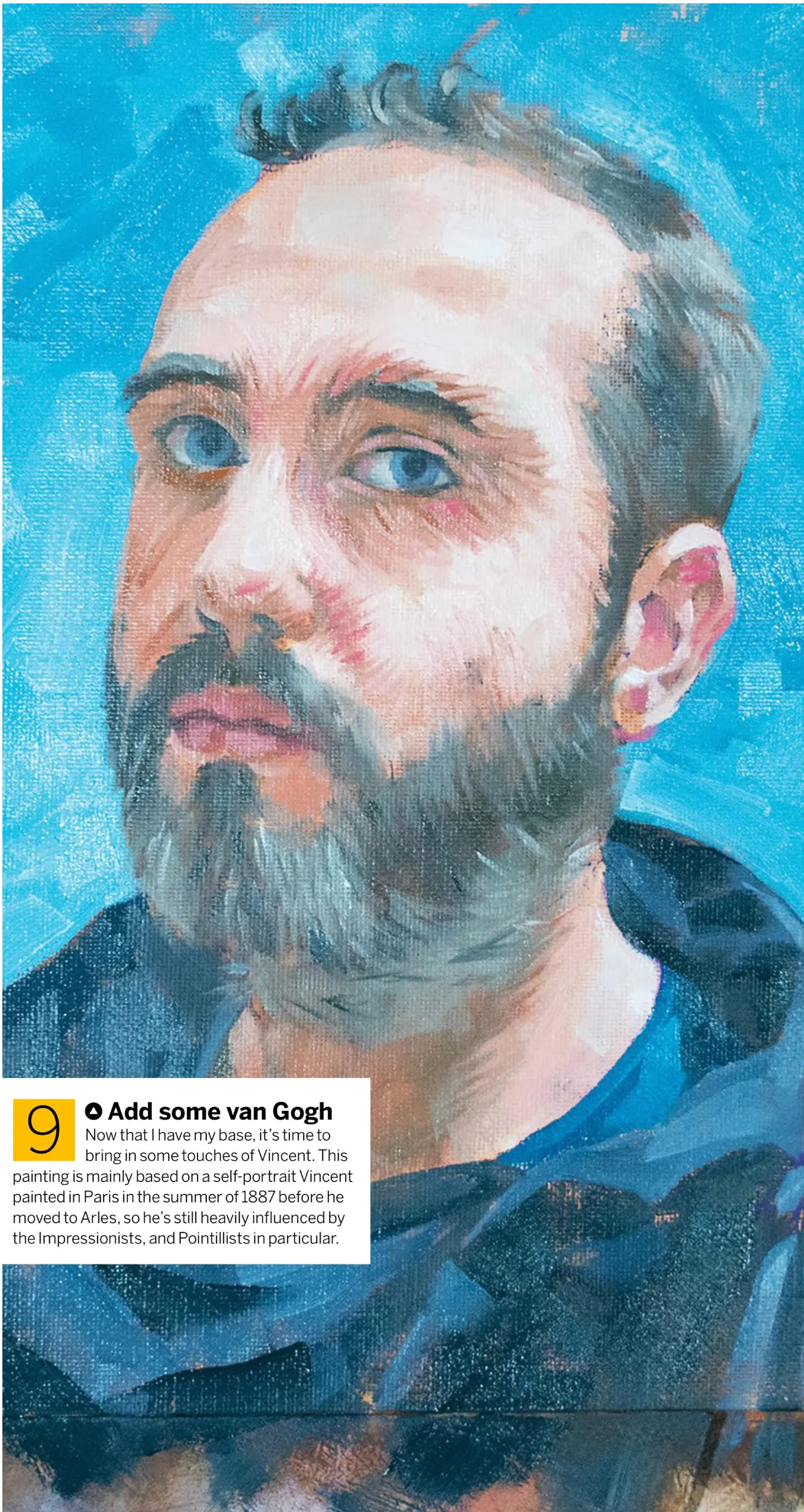
7 Add more detail

Once I've established the main areas of light and dark in the face, I break them up into further areas of different tone and colour. I also start to block in the torso and look at a colour to use for the background. Allow yourself to experiment at these early stages.



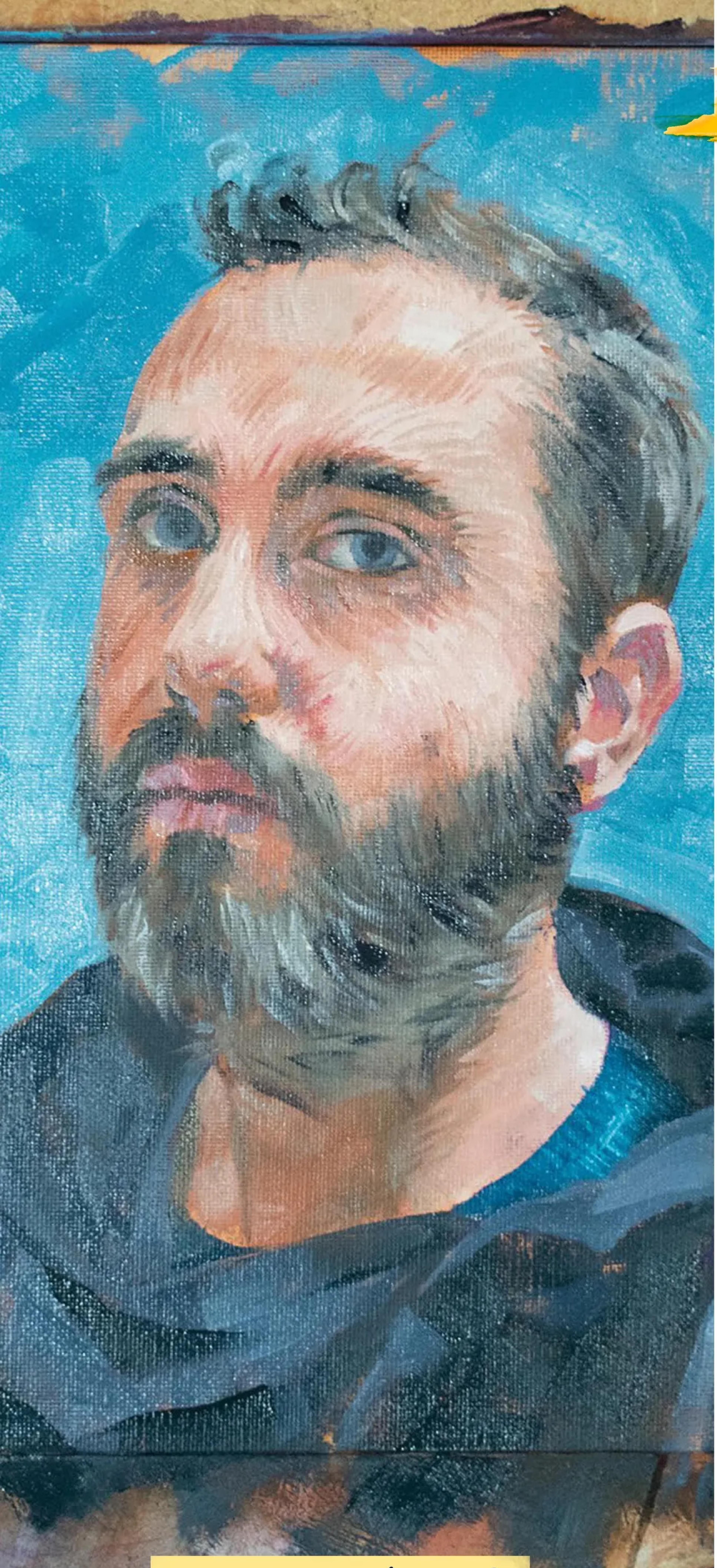
8 Unify the elements

You should aim to have all of the canvas worked at this stage. You need to see the painting as a whole and judge how the tone and colour of each area relates and affects each other, even if you still need to add further details to certain areas.



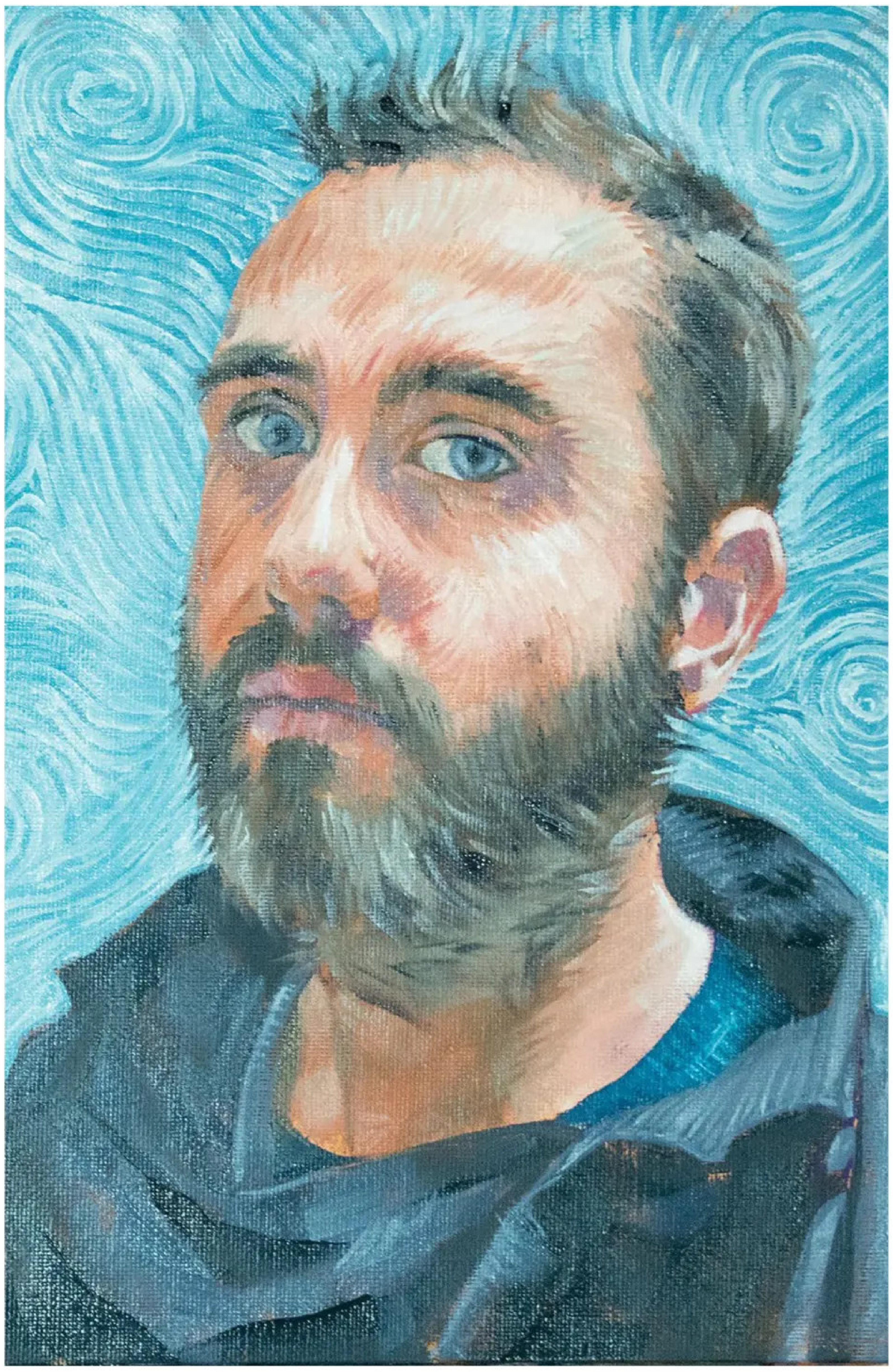
9 Add some van Gogh

Now that I have my base, it's time to bring in some touches of Vincent. This painting is mainly based on a self-portrait Vincent painted in Paris in the summer of 1887 before he moved to Arles, so he's still heavily influenced by the Impressionists, and Pointillists in particular.



10 ◀ Dabs of colour

Using the blocking-in as a guide, apply Vincent-style dabs of colour, allowing the brushmarks to follow and describe the form as I go. I pay close attention to areas of dramatic shift in tone: they enable me to create some interesting and bold marks. When trying this for yourself, look out for colours that jump out at you, and don't be afraid to exaggerate these for effect.



11 ▲ Fine-tune and finish up

When adding details, knowing when to stop is an art in itself, so hold off adding highlights until the very end. Try not to work over areas too much. If there's a problem just scrape it off and try again. You should have plenty of premixed colours left – just remember you don't have to use them all!

Be brain busy!

Listen to music or audio books. They can help keep the logical part of your brain busy while painting and this frees up your creative side to get really stuck in!

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Paint a classically inspired scene

Tran Nguyen reveals how she captures the essence of a maiden's distress through the use of body language, dynamic elements and a rich blend of colours

About **TRAN**
Georgia, US
Tran is a freelance illustrator and gallery artist based in Georgia, US. She has exhibited with galleries in Seattle, New York City, Los Angeles and Barcelona.
www.mynameistran.com

Therapeutic imagery – visuals that can be used as a psycho-therapeutic support vehicle in healing the soul – has always held a deep fascination for me. The capturing of complex human emotions such as dismay intrigues me, and this inspires me to illustrate the classic damsel in distress.

Now that I've decided on the subject, I want to create an interpretation of a damsel in distress that's different from how she's been traditionally depicted in the past.

When I find myself in a tight spot, my mind will usually react chaotically. It's as if I'm submerged in a frenzy of emotions, each tearing my psyche in opposite directions.

BILLOWING DRESS

To convey this complex idea, the damsel's woe is represented through the billowing of her dress, as if she's been cast into a void of emptiness. Meanwhile, her physical state will convey a feeling of weakness, as she fights to pull arrows out of her body. These arrows symbolise the many adversities that have brought on my character's state of sheer vulnerability.

Along the same vein, keeping the face emotionless and letting the body and surrounding elements support the narrative should result in a more intriguing image.

My aim is for the viewer to be able to relate to this imagery and foster feelings of well-being from it. It's similar to listening to a sad song when you're heartbroken. I want my audience to have a visceral response when they view it, to help them overcome whatever obstacle life has put in their way.

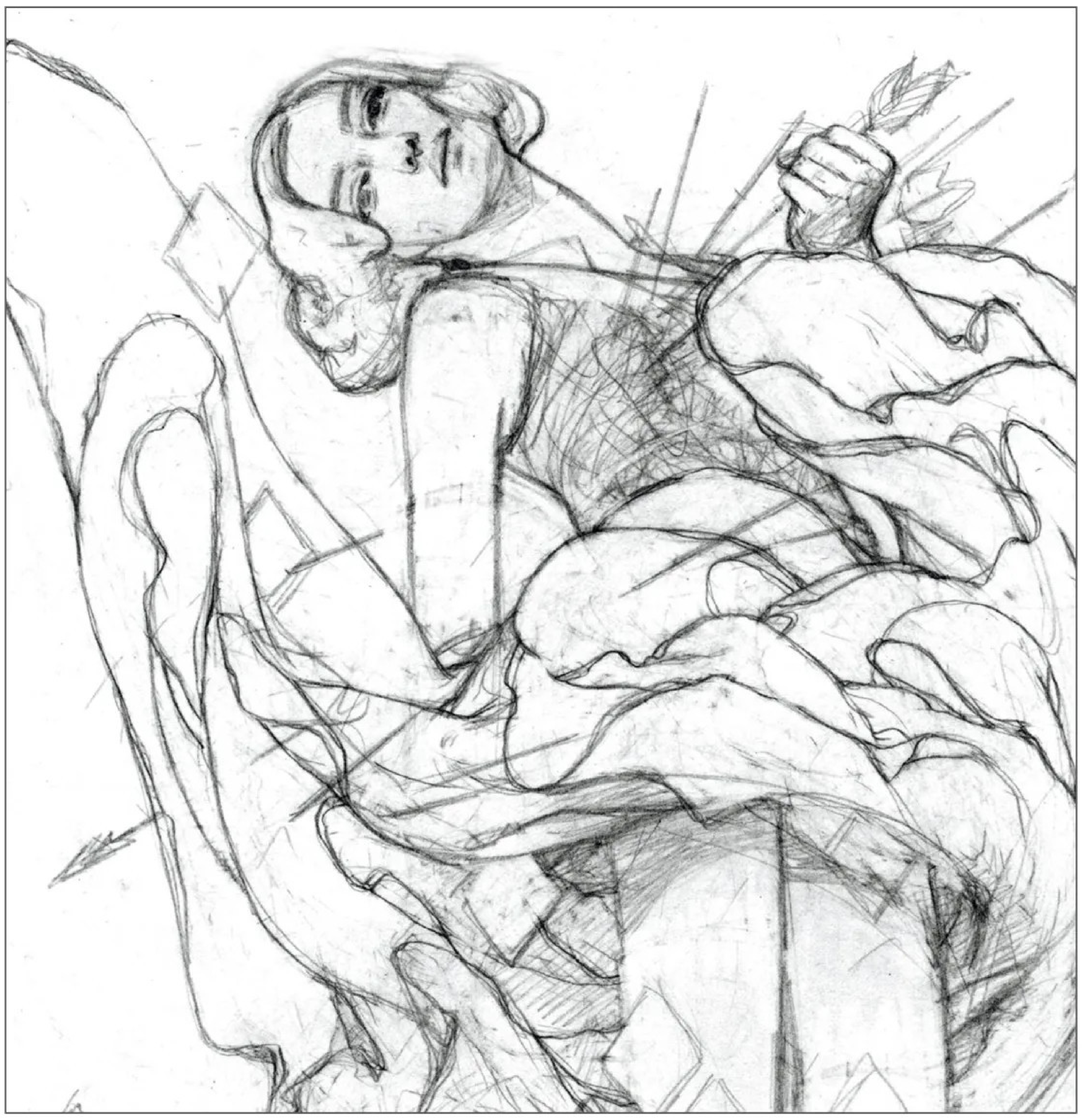
Materials

- ☐ Prismacolor graphite, pencil (HB, 2B), Bristol paper, Paper Mate Tuff Stuff, Eraser Stick
- ☐ Tracing paper
- ☐ Golden Fluid
- ☐ Acrylics Colors
- ☐ Winsor & Newton watercolours
- ☐ Prismacolor coloured pencils, Prismacolor Verithin pencils
- ☐ 12 Filbert, 6 Round, 1 Round, 8 Round and 1-inch Washer, Workable fixative, Paper towels, Rives BFK paper, Light table

1

Conceptualise a distressed damsel

I start off with a very loose sketch that I refine into a tight line drawing after I'm happy with my composition. In my experience, I find that clean lines are easier to transfer via my light table.



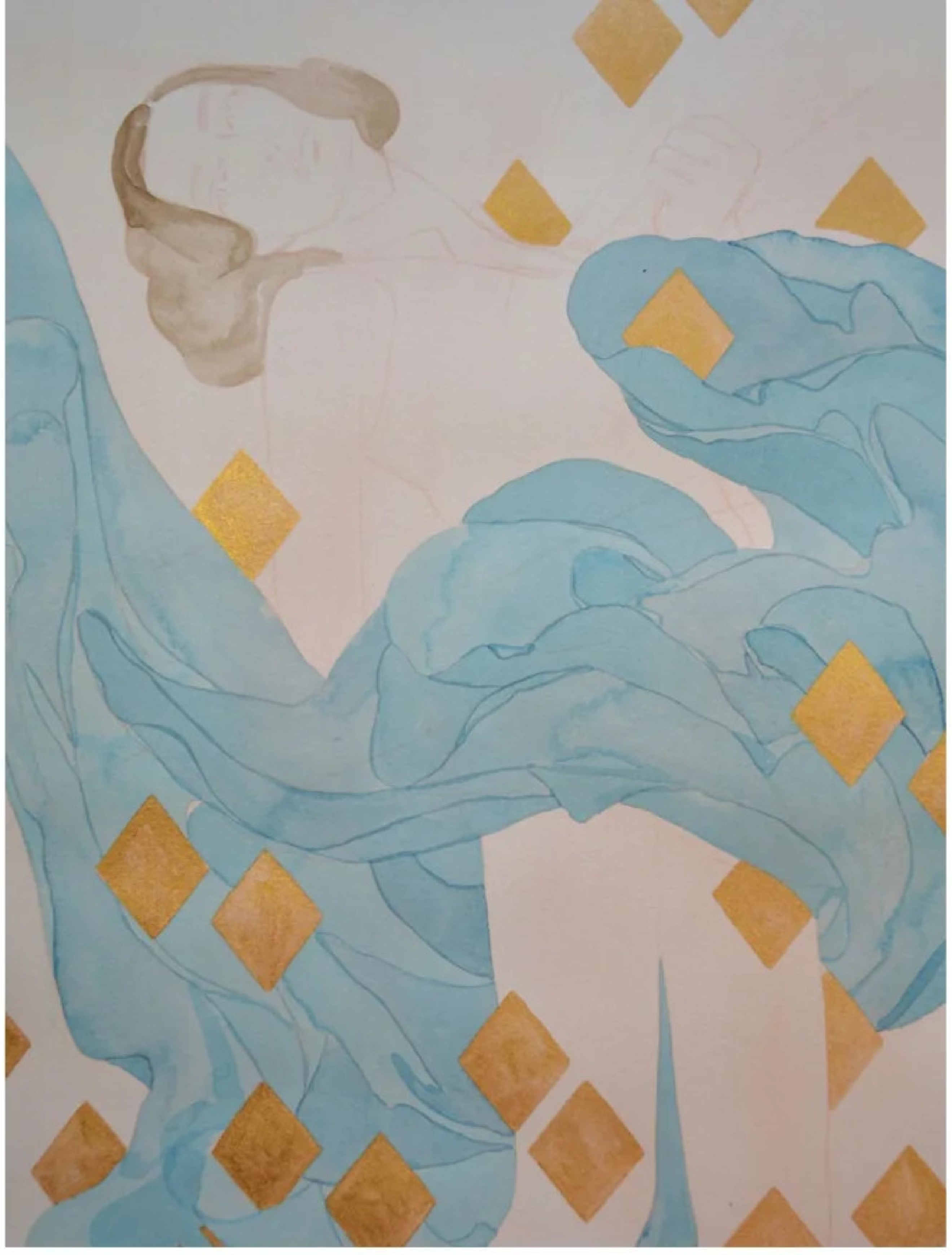
2

Tighten, transfer and tone

I start off with a very loose sketch that I refine into a tight line drawing after I'm happy with my composition. In my experience, I find that clean lines are easier to transfer via my light table.

Outline advice

I outline the edges of shapes and objects with a saturated colour rather than black. This gives the painting a sense of volume.



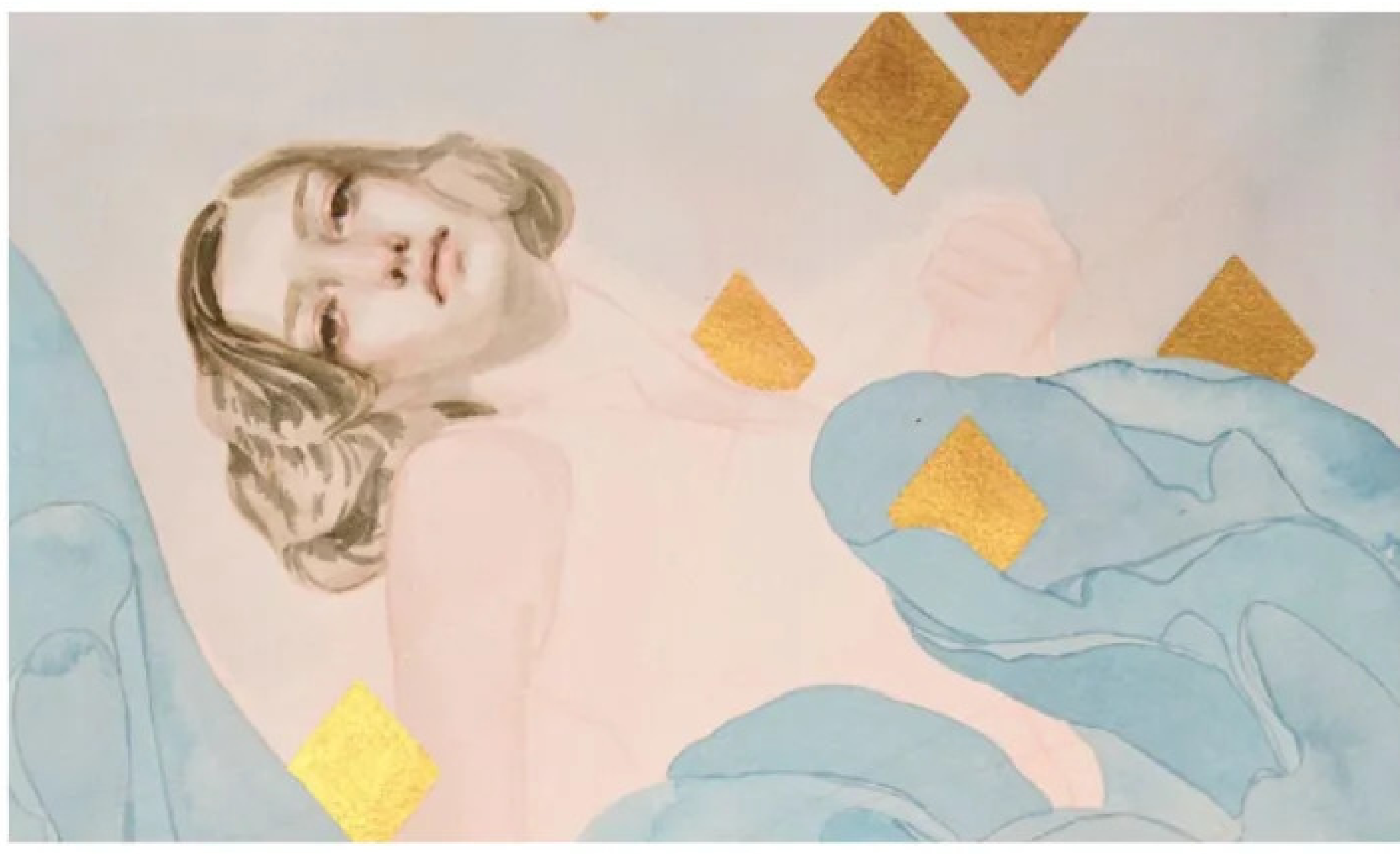
3

Colour-block whimsicality

I like to fill in all the parts of the painting with flat colour using a 6 Round brush before I begin any detailing. This helps me visualise what colours will work best and where values should be pushed or lifted.

Improve your glazing methods

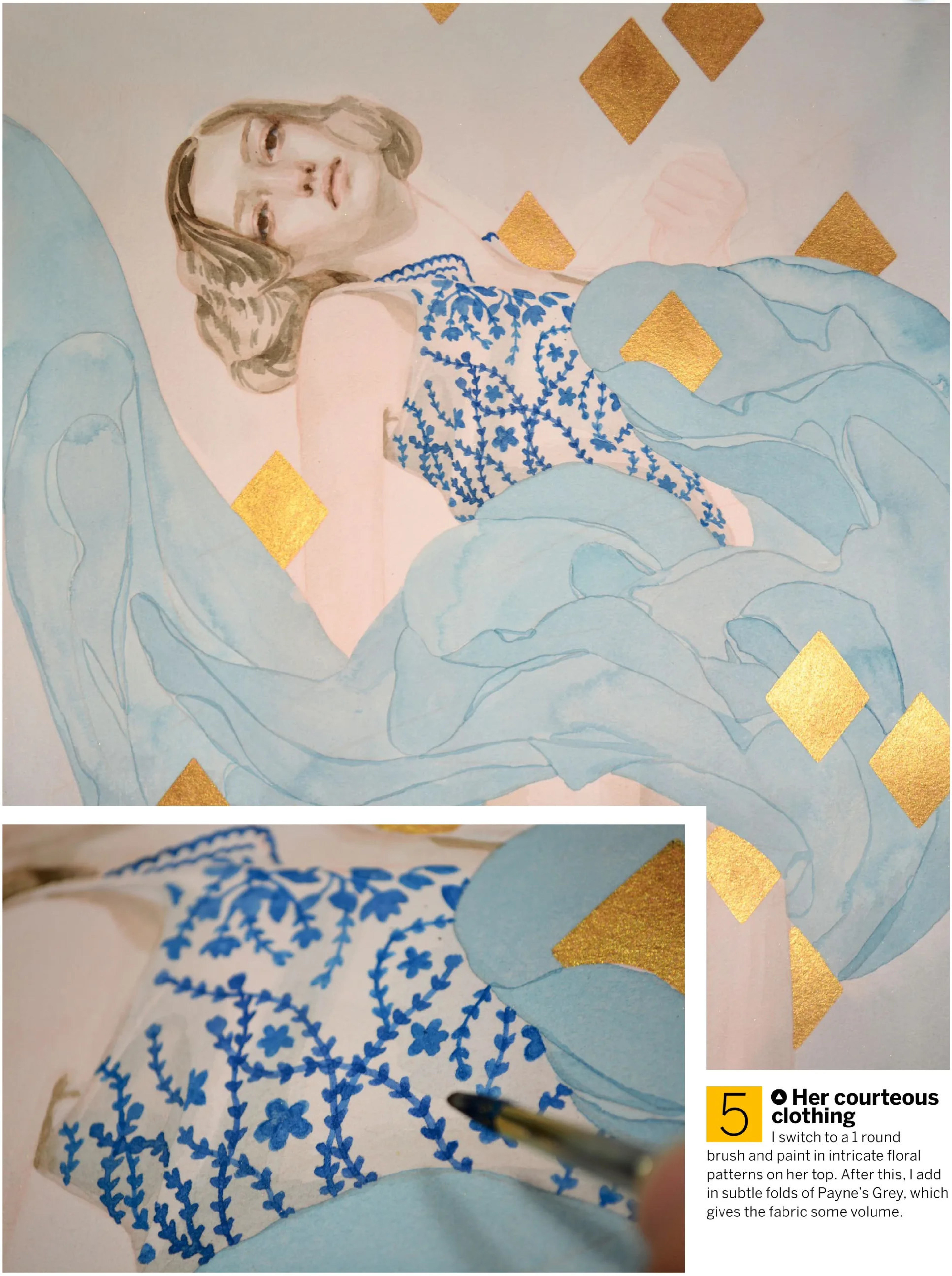
I prefer using Golden Fluid Acrylics Colors instead of its standard line of Heavy Body Colors, because they're better suited for glazing. The liquid colours are less viscous, and easier to mix and dilute. In addition, if I need the paint to dry slower, I'll mix in a small amount of Golden's retarder to increase the drying time.



4

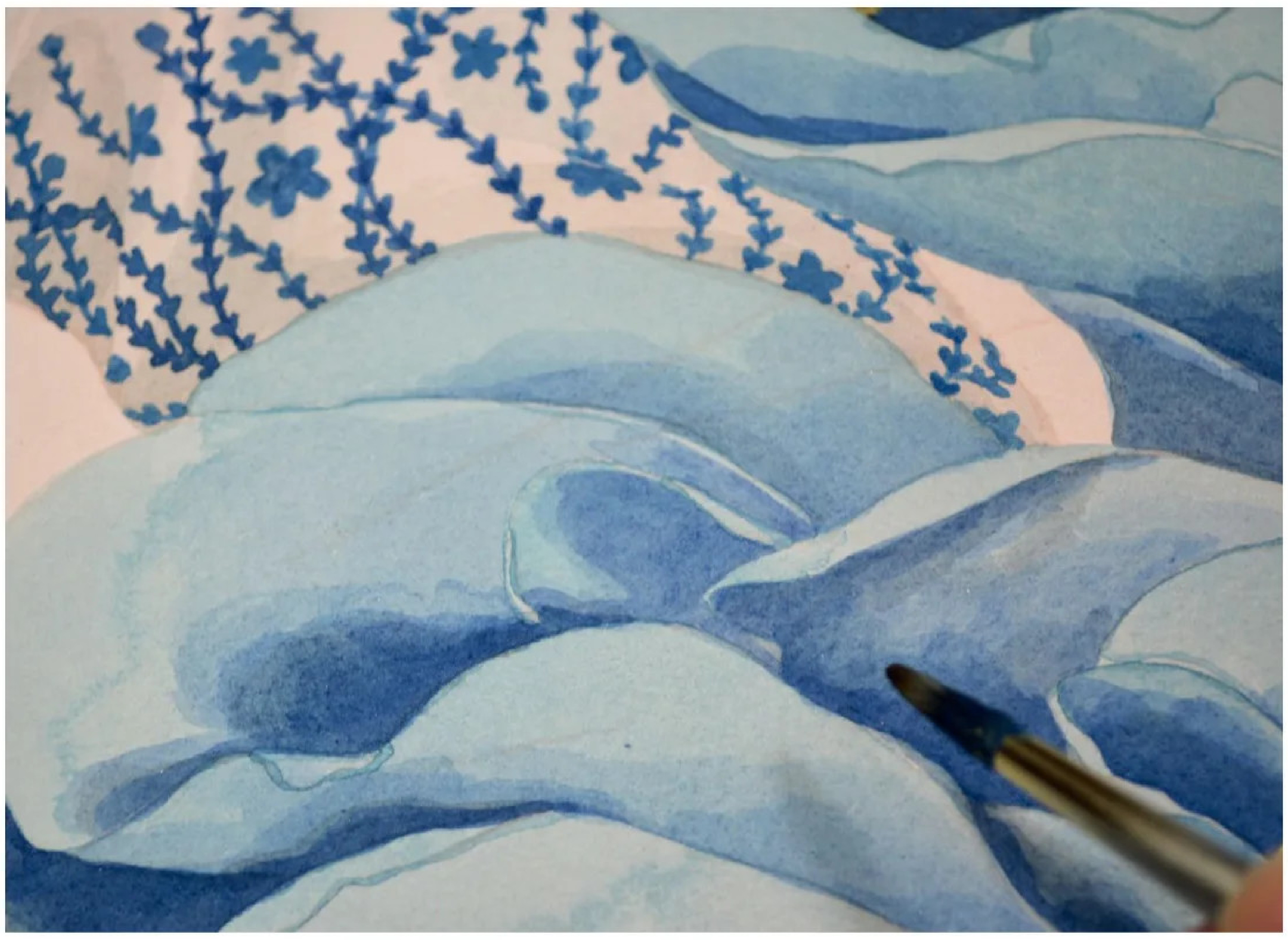
A fair maiden

By diluting the paint with a lot of water, I'm able to create a soft gradient that's perfect for rendering fair skin complexions. For an even more subtle gradation, I use Winsor & Newton's watercolours. Here, I lay down six glazes of raw umber and cadmium red for her skin tone.



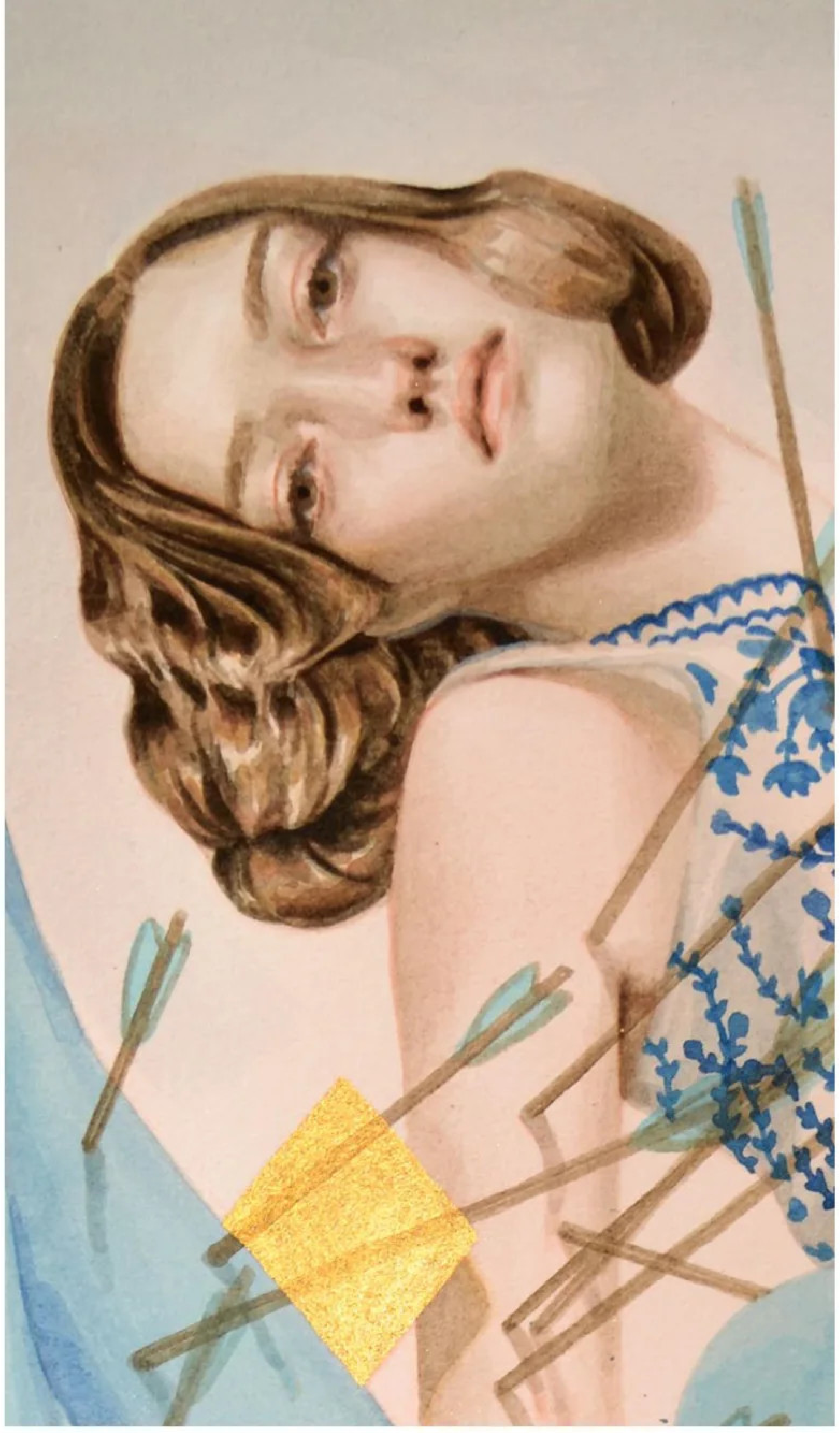
5 ▲ Her courteous clothing

I switch to a 1 round brush and paint in intricate floral patterns on her top. After this, I add in subtle folds of Payne's Grey, which gives the fabric some volume.



6 Billows of a deep-seated dress

To add depth to her dress, I focus on its lights and darks. I keep to the same light source and make sure that every fold casts a shadow. The rounded part of a fold will produce a highlight, which I render with a white coloured pencil.

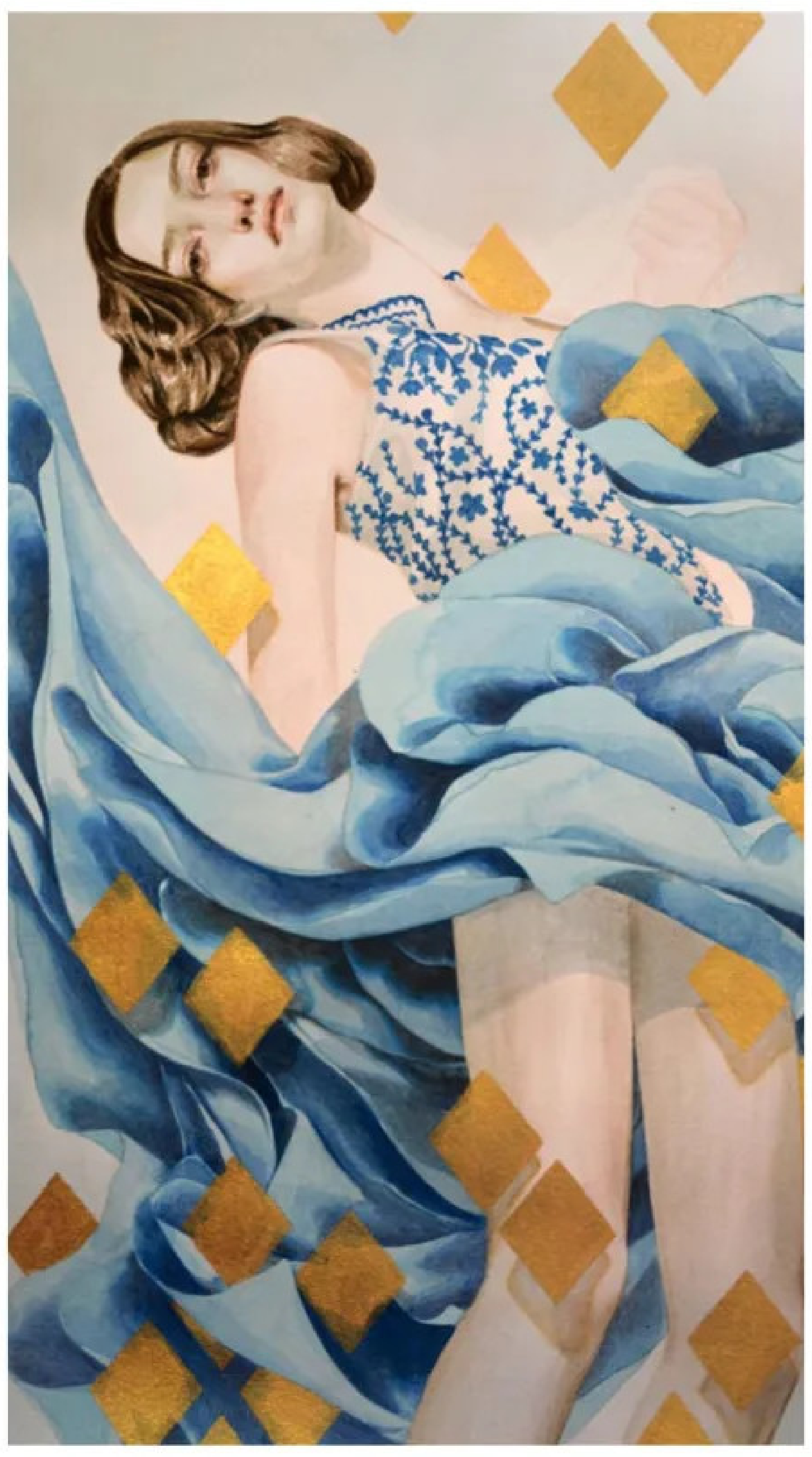


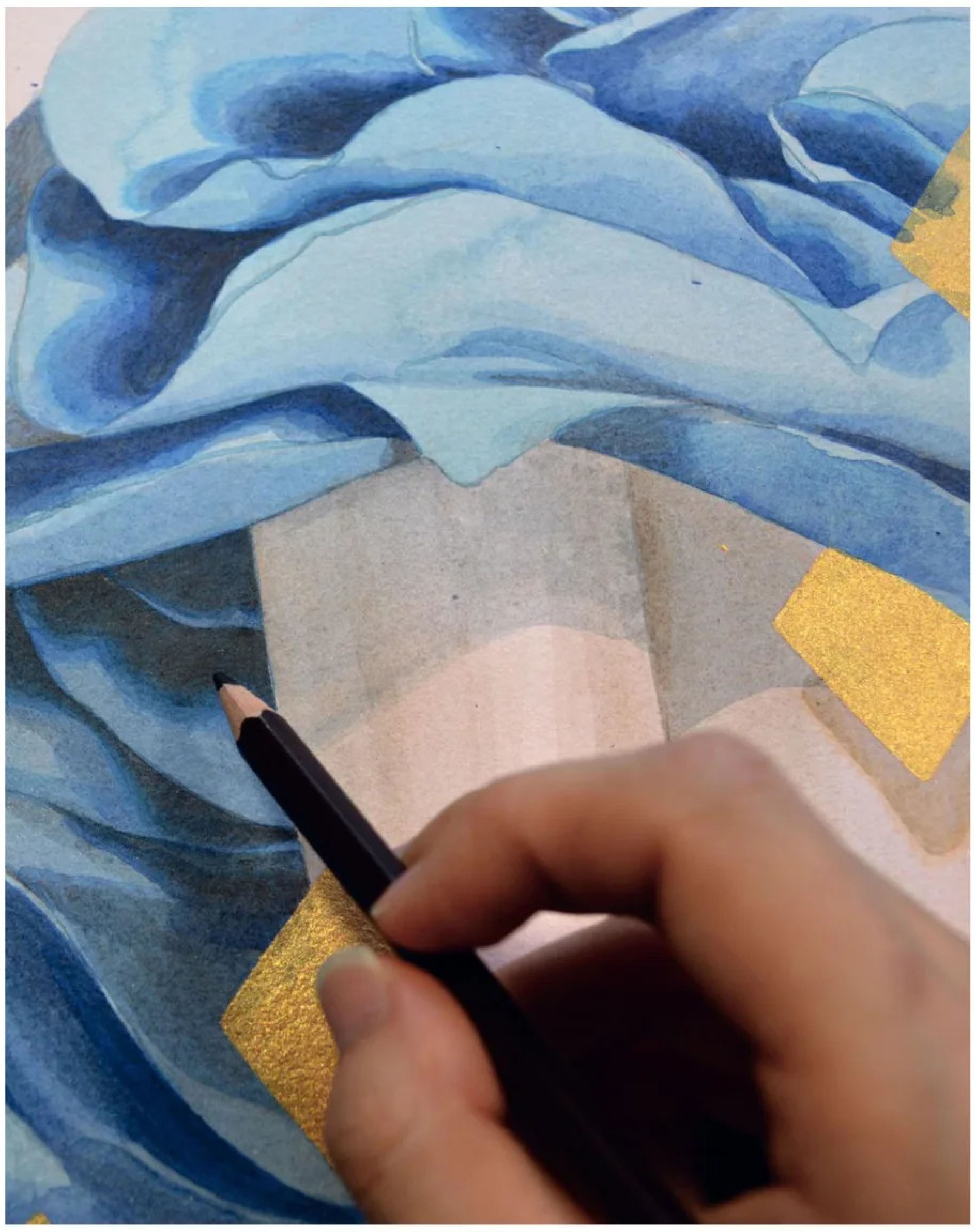
7 Her fixated gaze

Usually after 20-plus glazes, the paper tends to lose its tooth. This is when I spray it down with Blair's Workable Fixative in a well-ventilated area. After it dries,I go back in with another layer of coloured pencils and continue to push the shadows.

Wrist technique

When painting, rotate your wrist. You'll utilise every angle of the brush and create a more fluid and organic stroke.



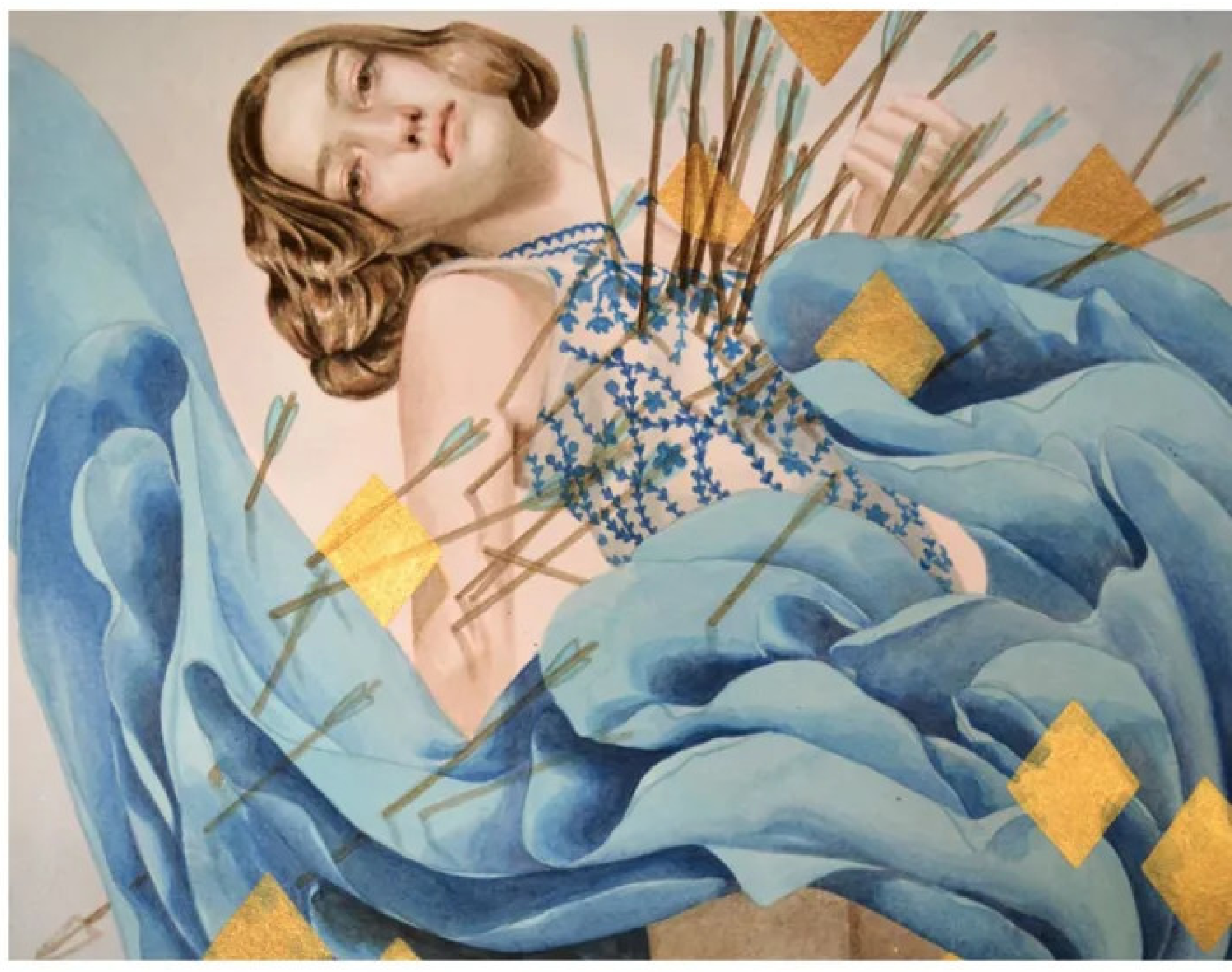


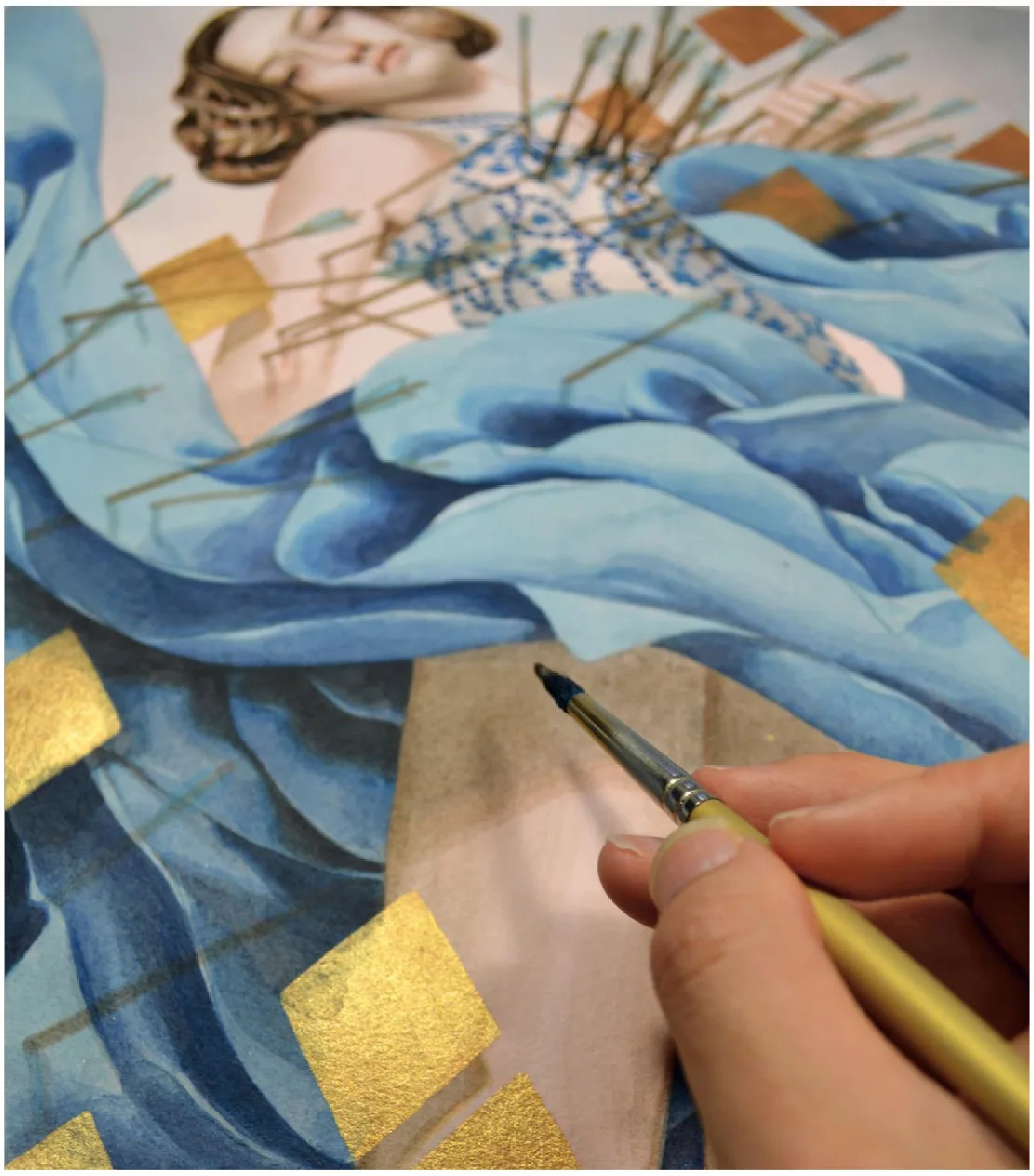
9 Even greater depth

Diluting acrylics can makes it difficult to produce deep values. To help push them, I go over the shadows in her dress with brown and blue Verithin pencils. What's so good about Verithins is that they react like watercolour-soluble pencils when you paint over them.

8 Arrows to her heart

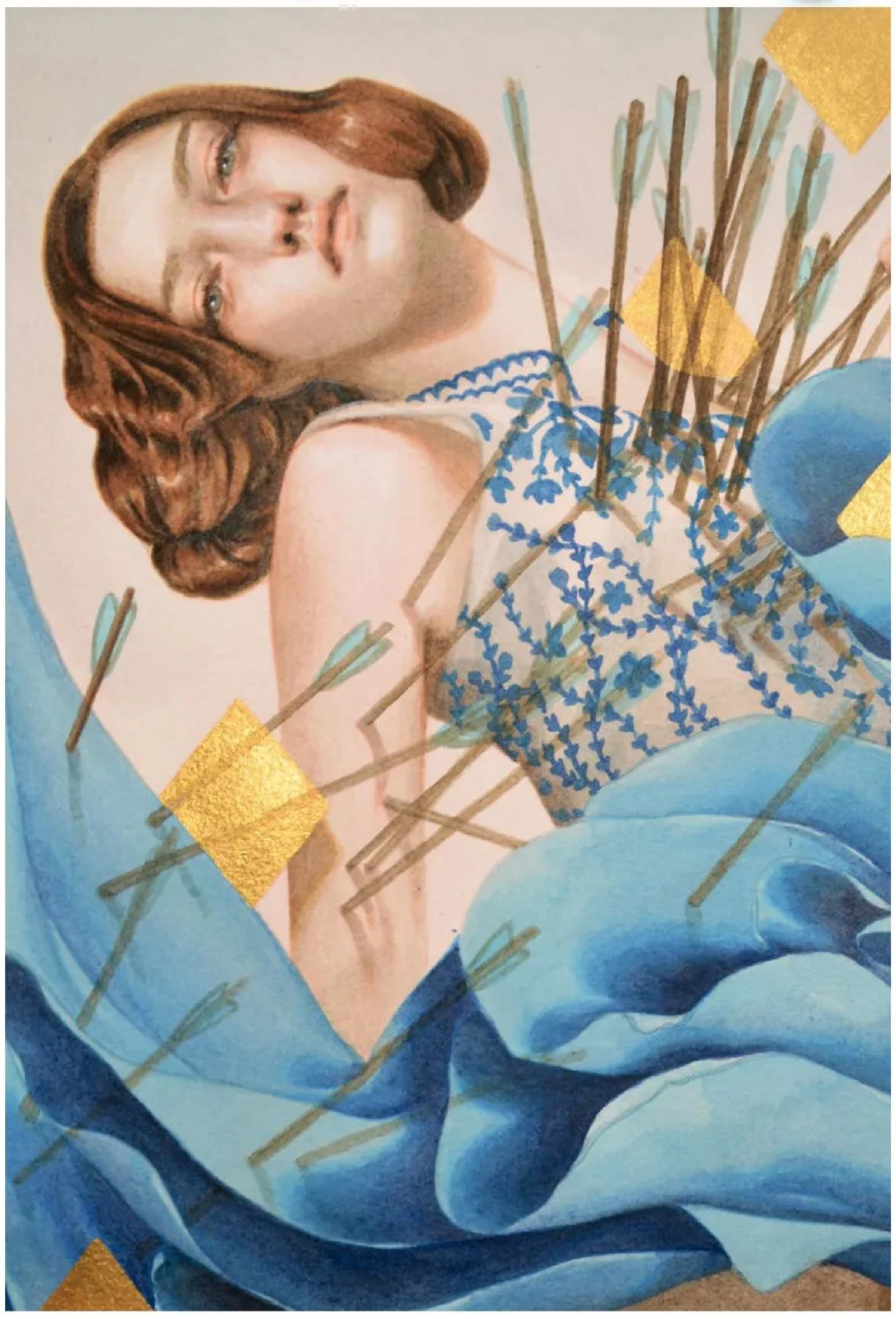
My approach is to work on each component of the painting simultaneously. This helps me see how one area is working alongside another. Here, I lightly paint in the arrows so that I can quickly lift them if they're positioned wrong. I use the colour pencils over them to create cast shadows on her body and dress.





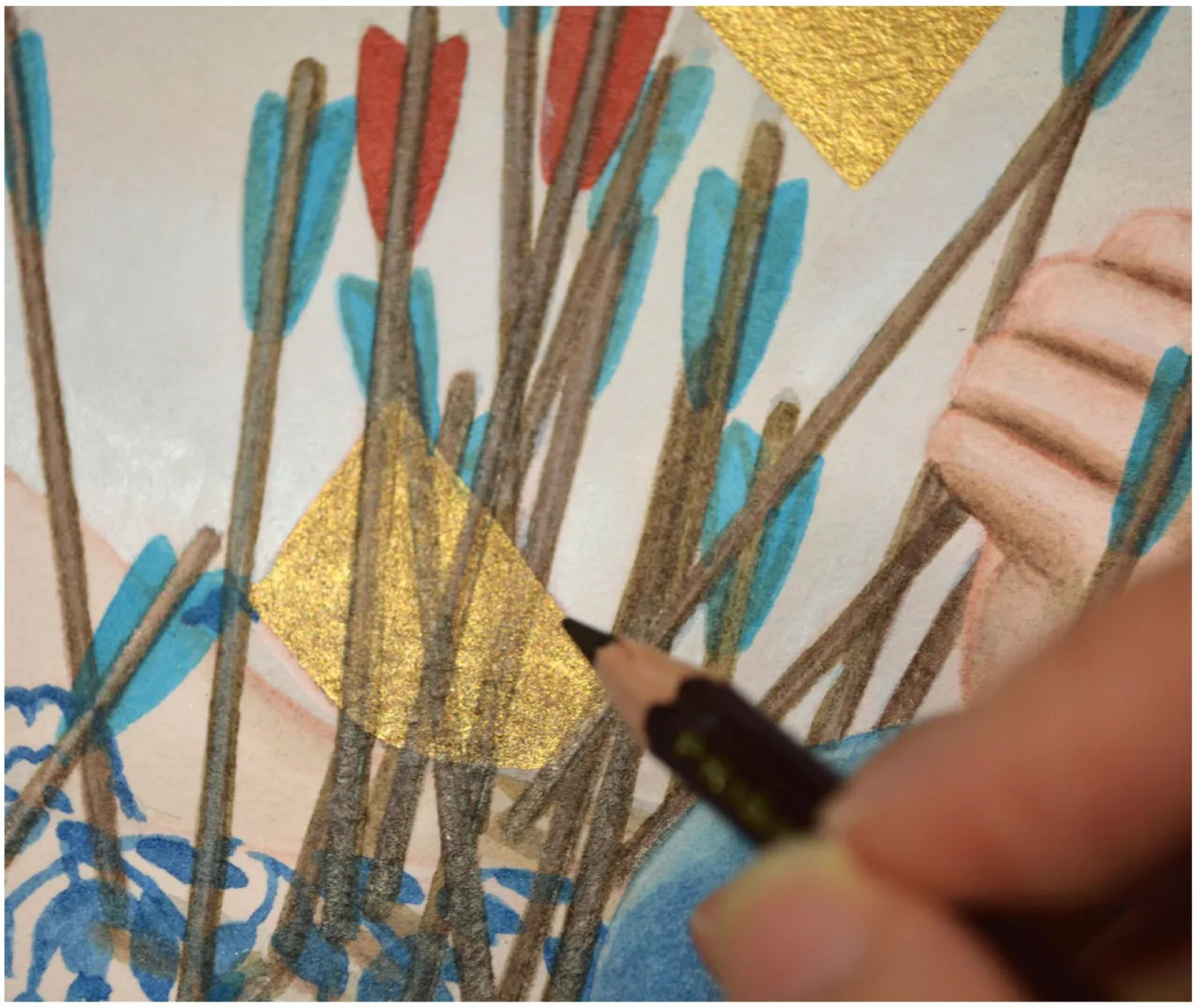
10 ▲ Paint a billowing dress

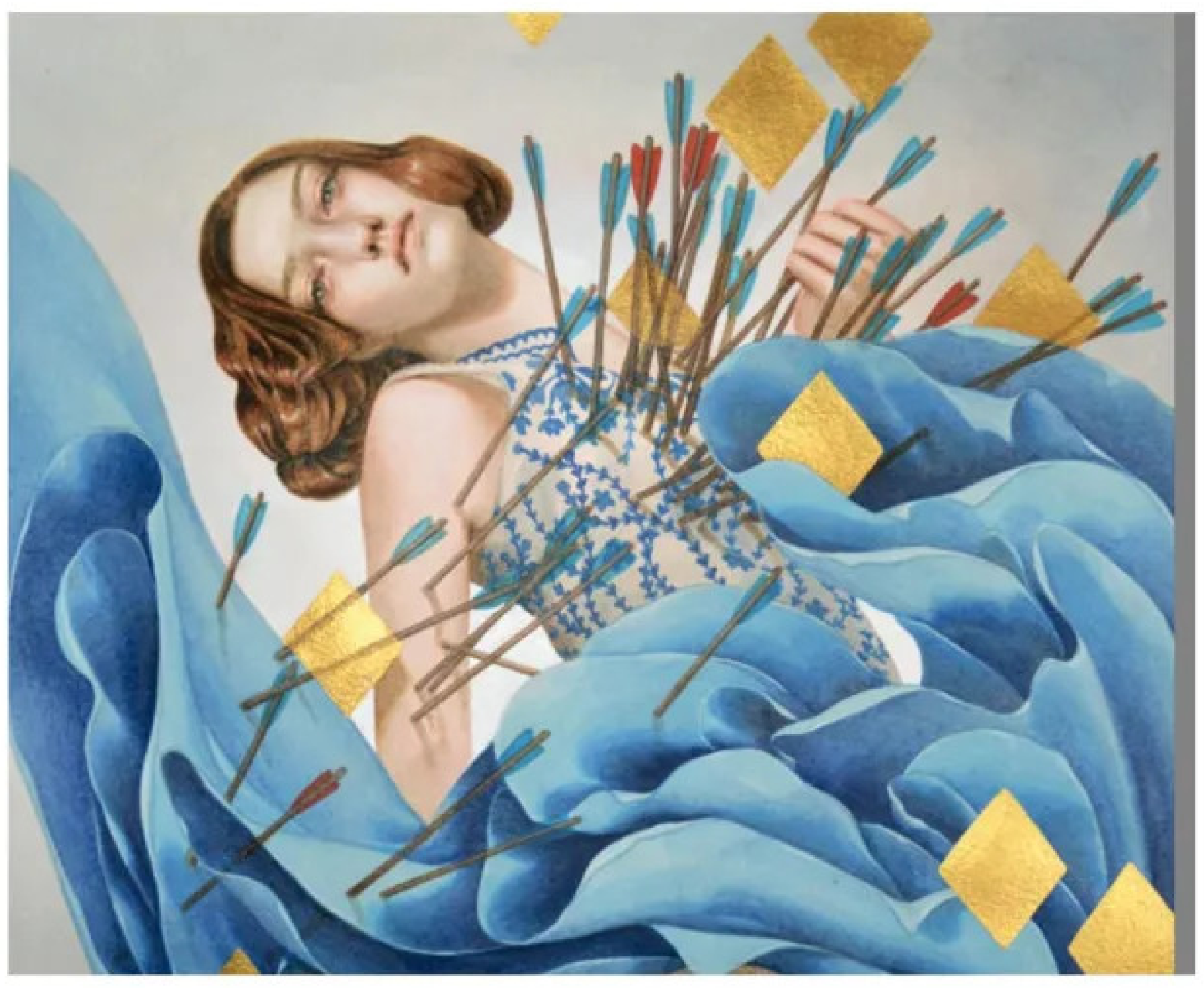
Now that I have more tooth to my surface, I can add several glazes of brilliant blue to the dress to give it a fuller look.



11 ▲ A four-cornered affair

I'm usually careless when it comes to painting around the geometric shapes, because I know I can refine them later. I have found that painting cast shadows can help to create cohesion between abstract and representational elements in my work.





12 ◀ The end of the fairy tale

Happy accidents will happen every so often, but when they don't, I remember to correct stray marks and overlapping issues. Here, I repaint the arrow's shaft over the gold diamonds. A lot of last-minute refinements such as adding more highlights to her hair takes place. Then I scan the work, edit it digitally and send it to the client.

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Experiment with colour for dynamic oil portraits

Greg Harris demonstrates an approach to oil painting that focuses on applying oils liberally with exciting colour combinations

About **GREG**
Bristol, UK
Greg is predominantly an oil painter who specialises in the human figure (with the occasional watercolour and drawing thrown in). He exhibits across the country, welcomes commissions from individuals and organisations, does painting demonstrations and also teaches.
www.greg-artist.com

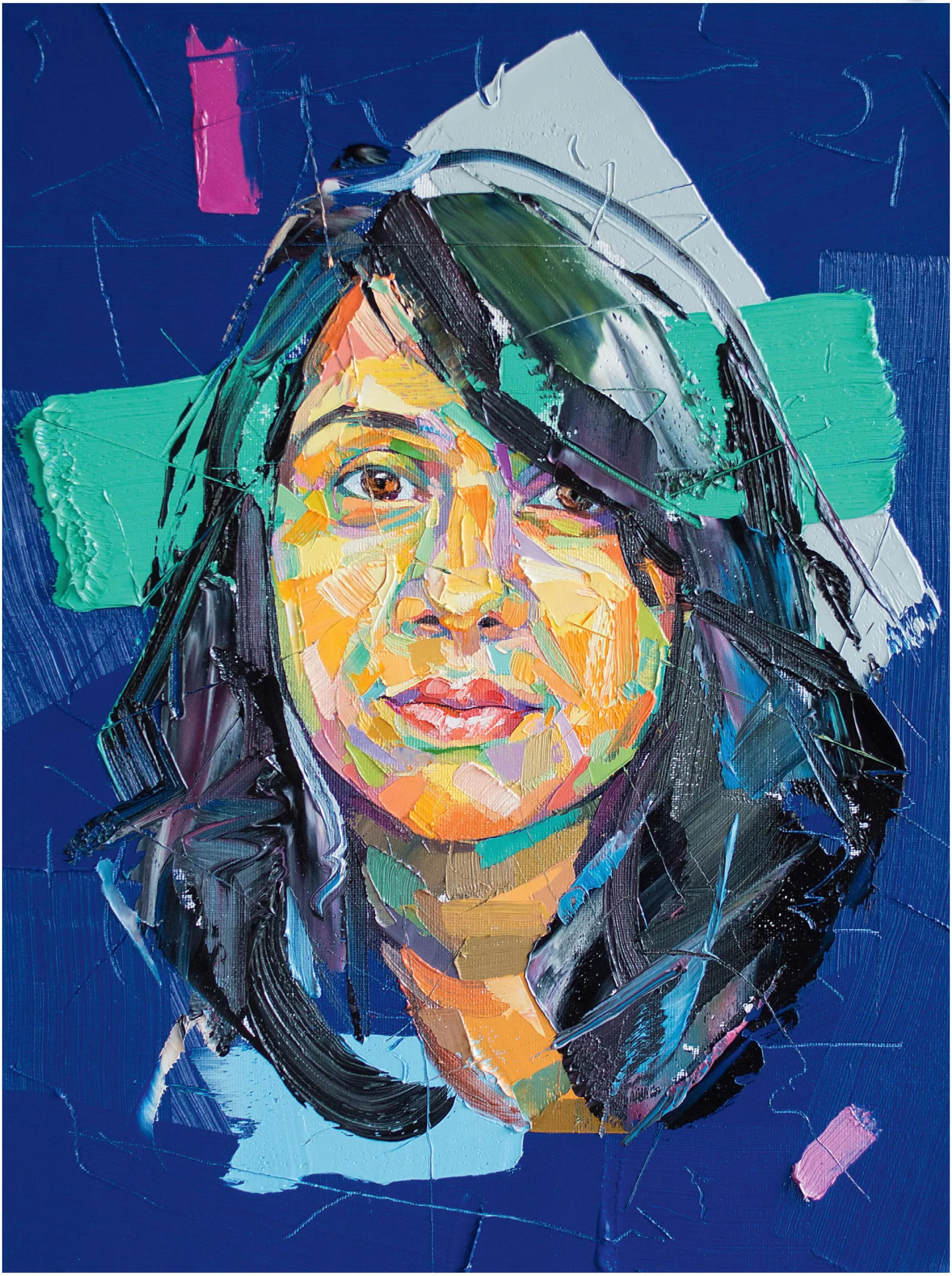
In this portrait in oils tutorial, I want to open the door for you to start mindfully introducing arbitrary colours and exciting gestures with a variety of tools. A basic understanding of the colour wheel and complementary colours would be useful, so you may need to do a quick bit of research to get a thorough overview.

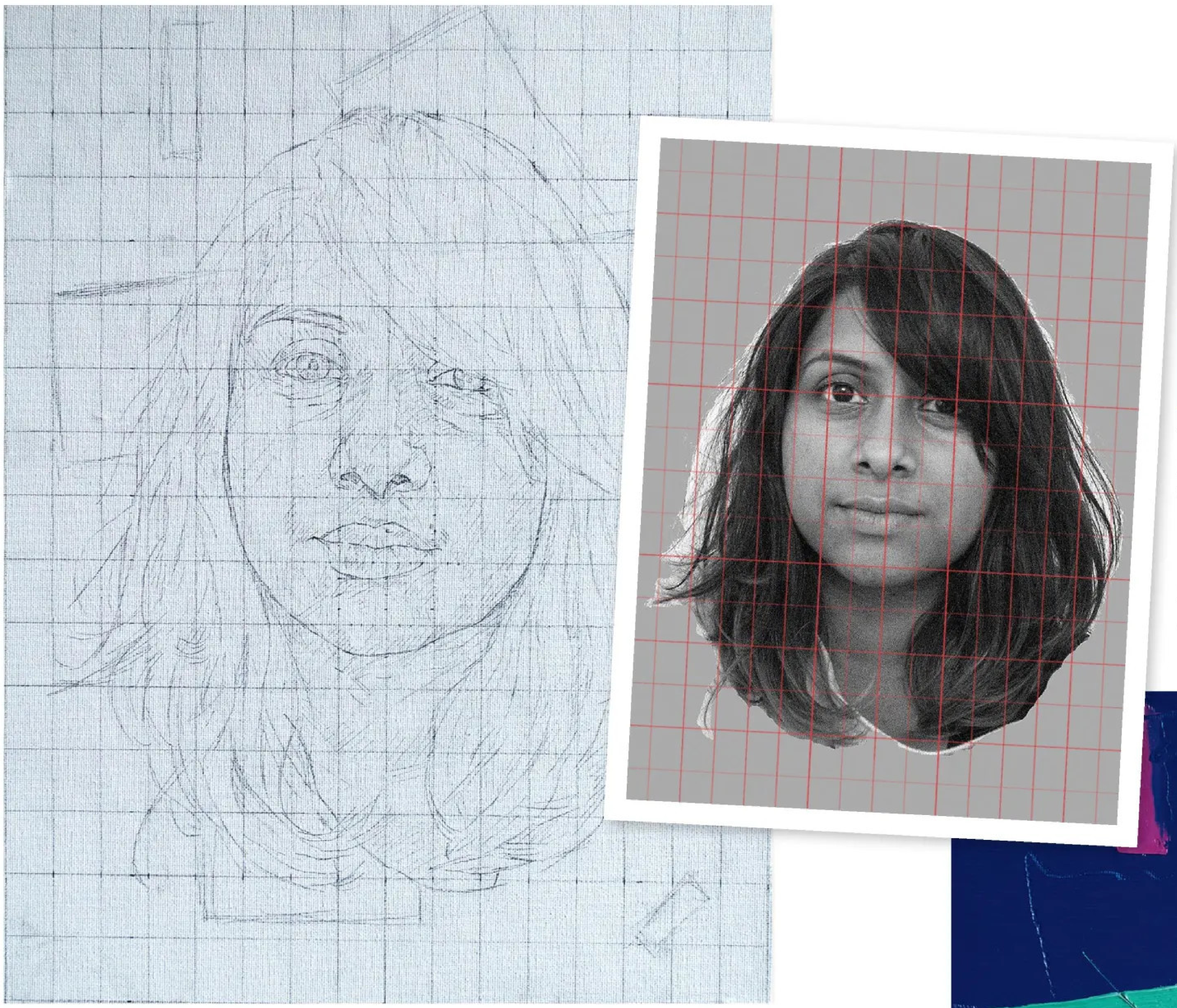
I love creating challenging colour combinations, varied surface qualities and large tonal shifts. The more freewheeling and distant from the original source (whilst not losing the connection), the more enjoyable I find it.

Before I begin almost every painting, I plan the colour scheme for all major elements in my head or on paper. Then I adapt it as the painting moves on. It is worth noting that some pigments react with one another by going almost black, so you might just have to use that Sap Green instead of that Viridian Green you originally wanted to use.

Materials

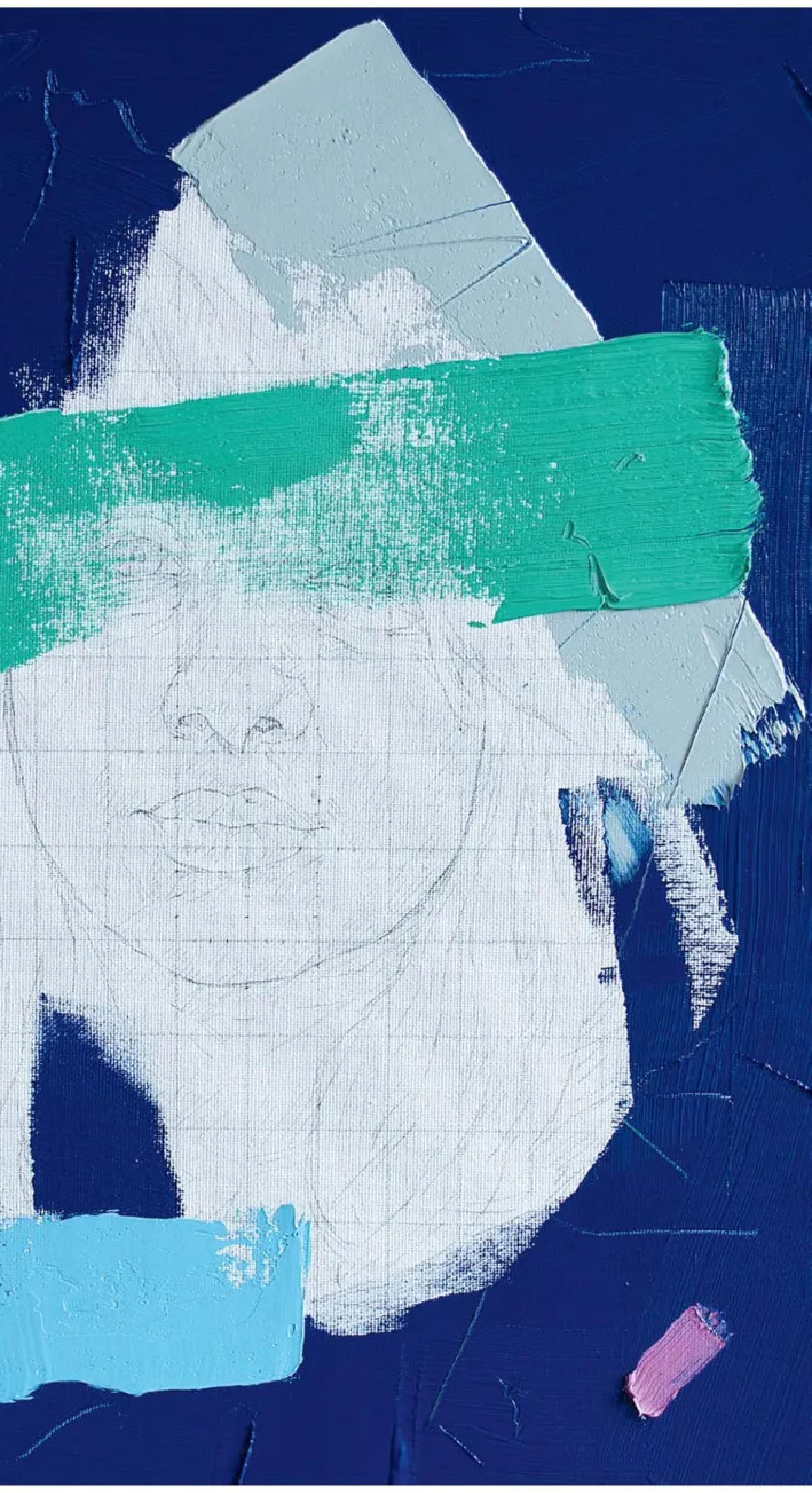
Greg uses a 40x30cm canvas board, a variety of synthetic and hoghair brushes, as well as palette knives of varying sizes. He primarily uses oil paints as he enjoys the variety of texture you can create with them as well as the vibrancy of the colours.

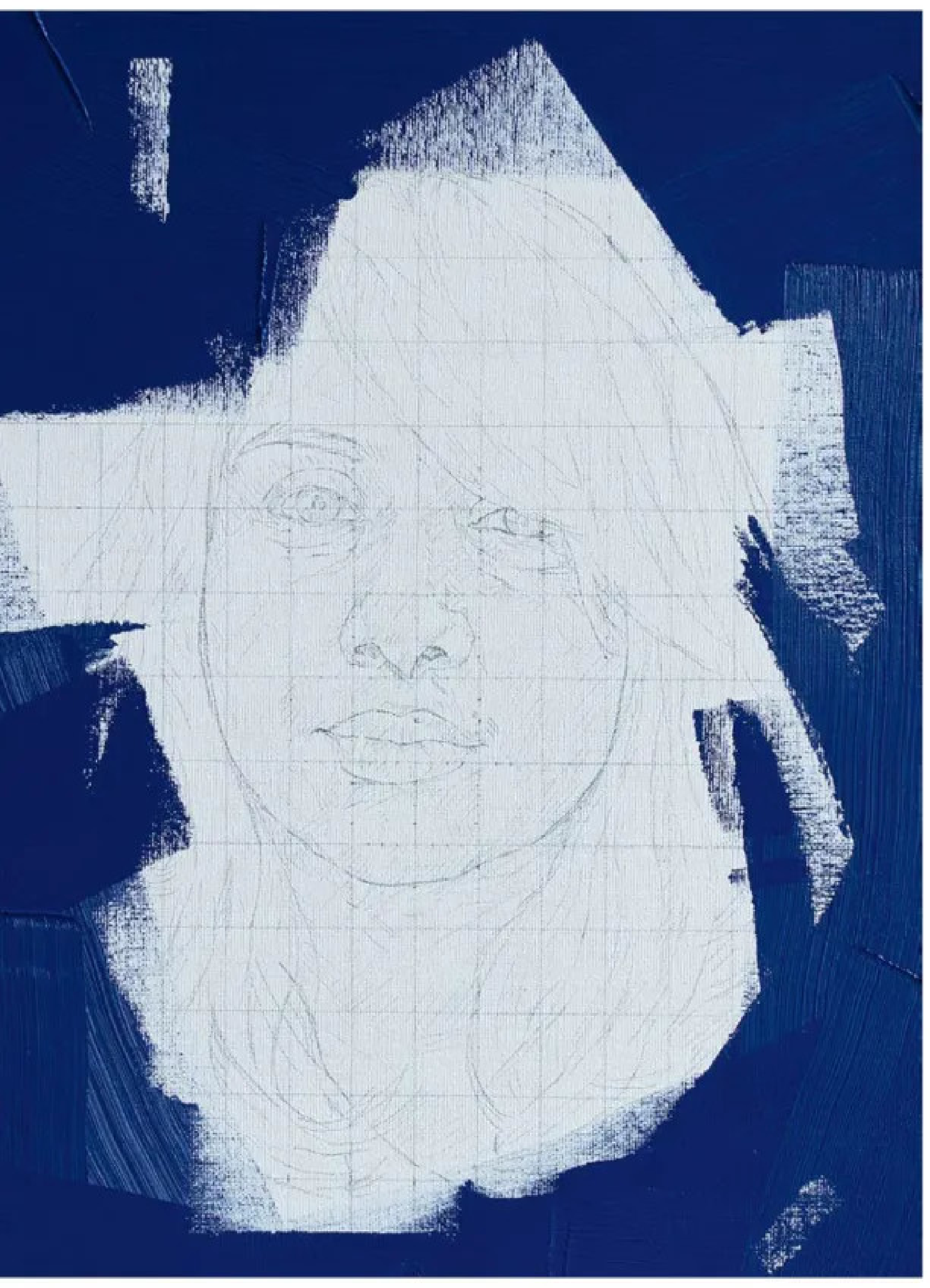


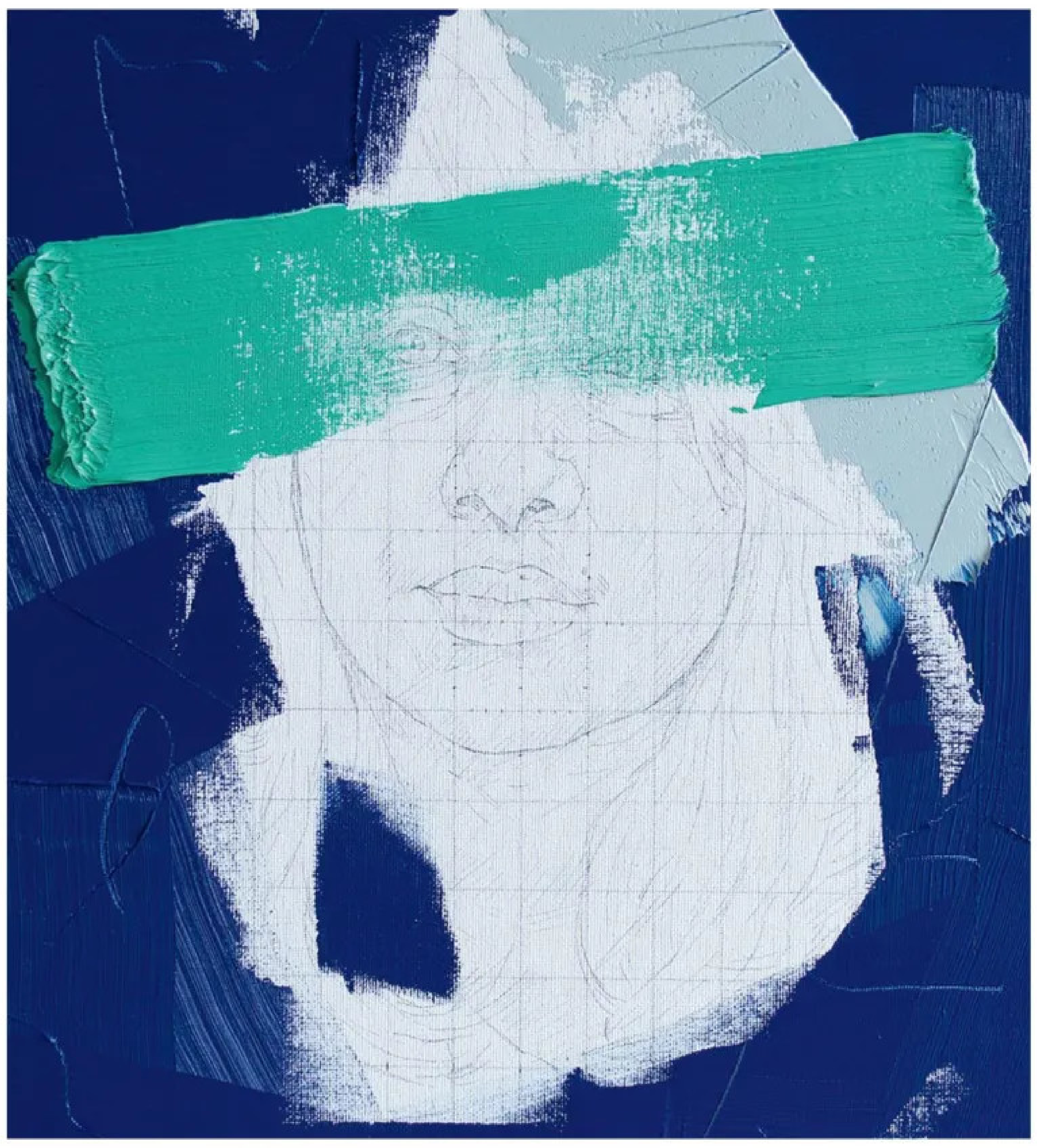


1 Initial drawing

When gridding up, make sure the drawing passes through the correct points along the gridlines. The eyes and nose are what we look at the most, followed by the mouth, so they're vital to get right. If you need to, divide all the gridlines around the eyes and nose again to make drawing easier.







2 Background

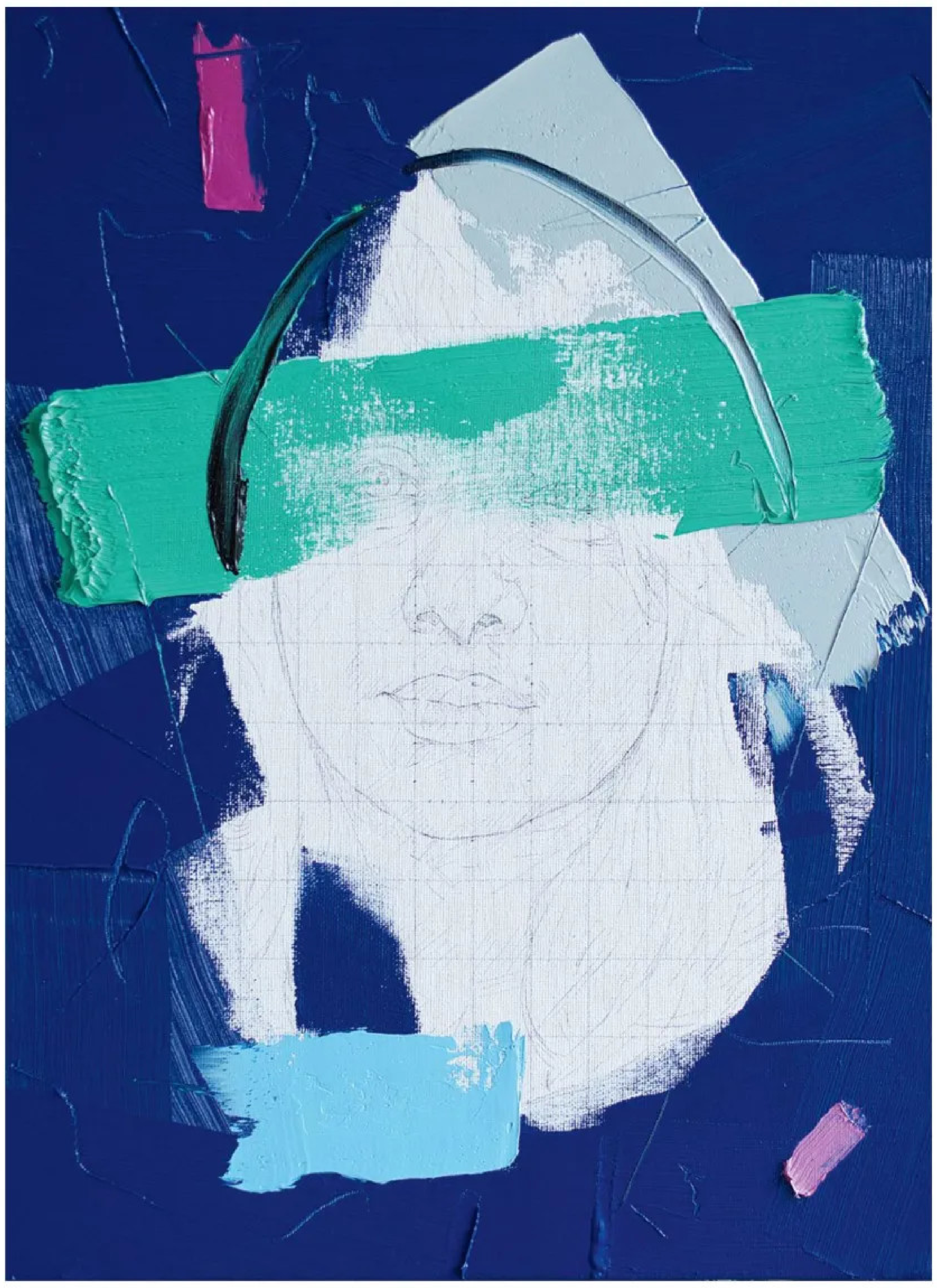
The face is the focus of the image, so I need to ensure it has extra oomph! Plan your colours ahead of time. I know I want the flesh to have lots of orange and yellow, so I'm going to make the background a midnight blue – this will make the face stand out more.

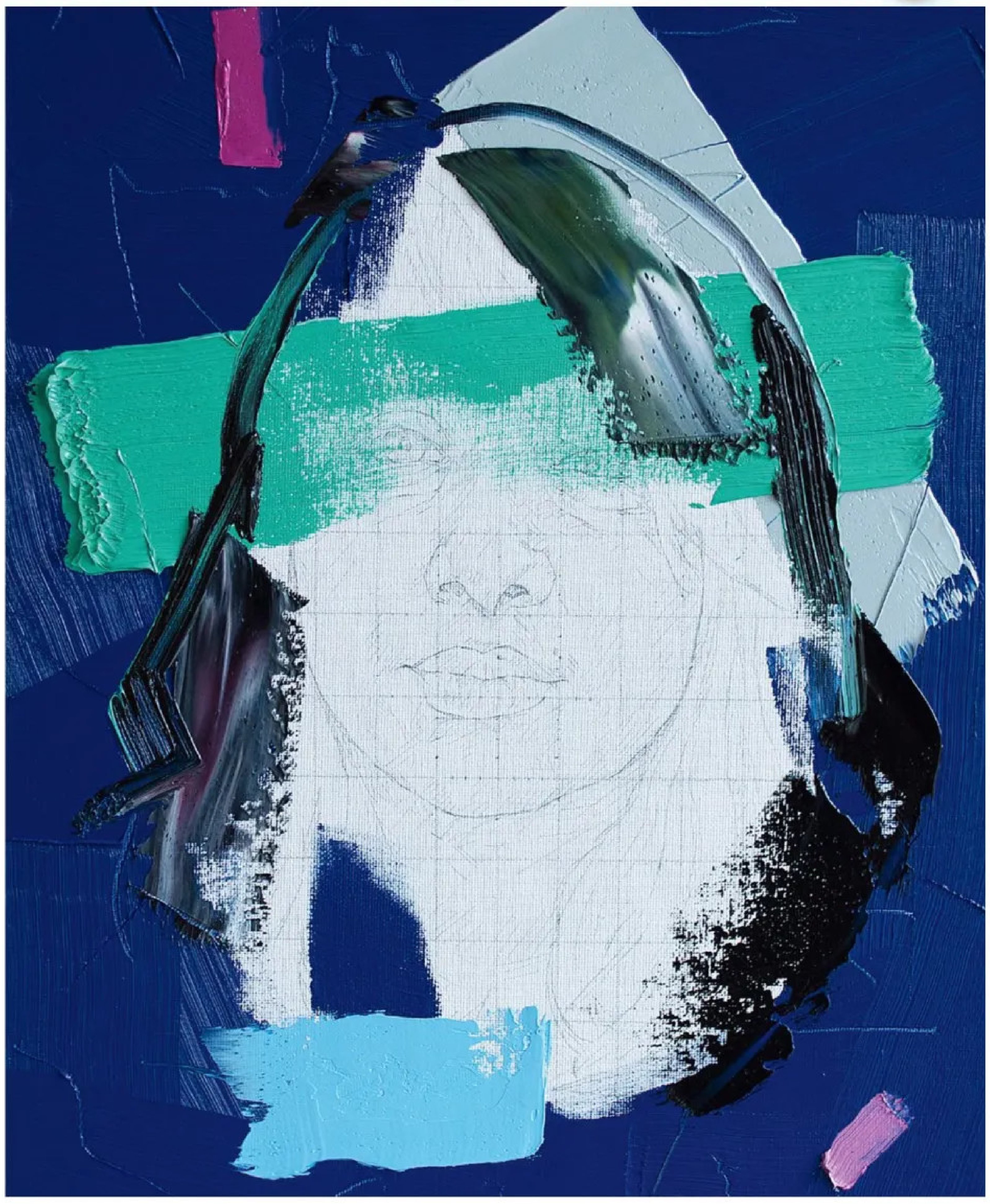
3 Set mark direction

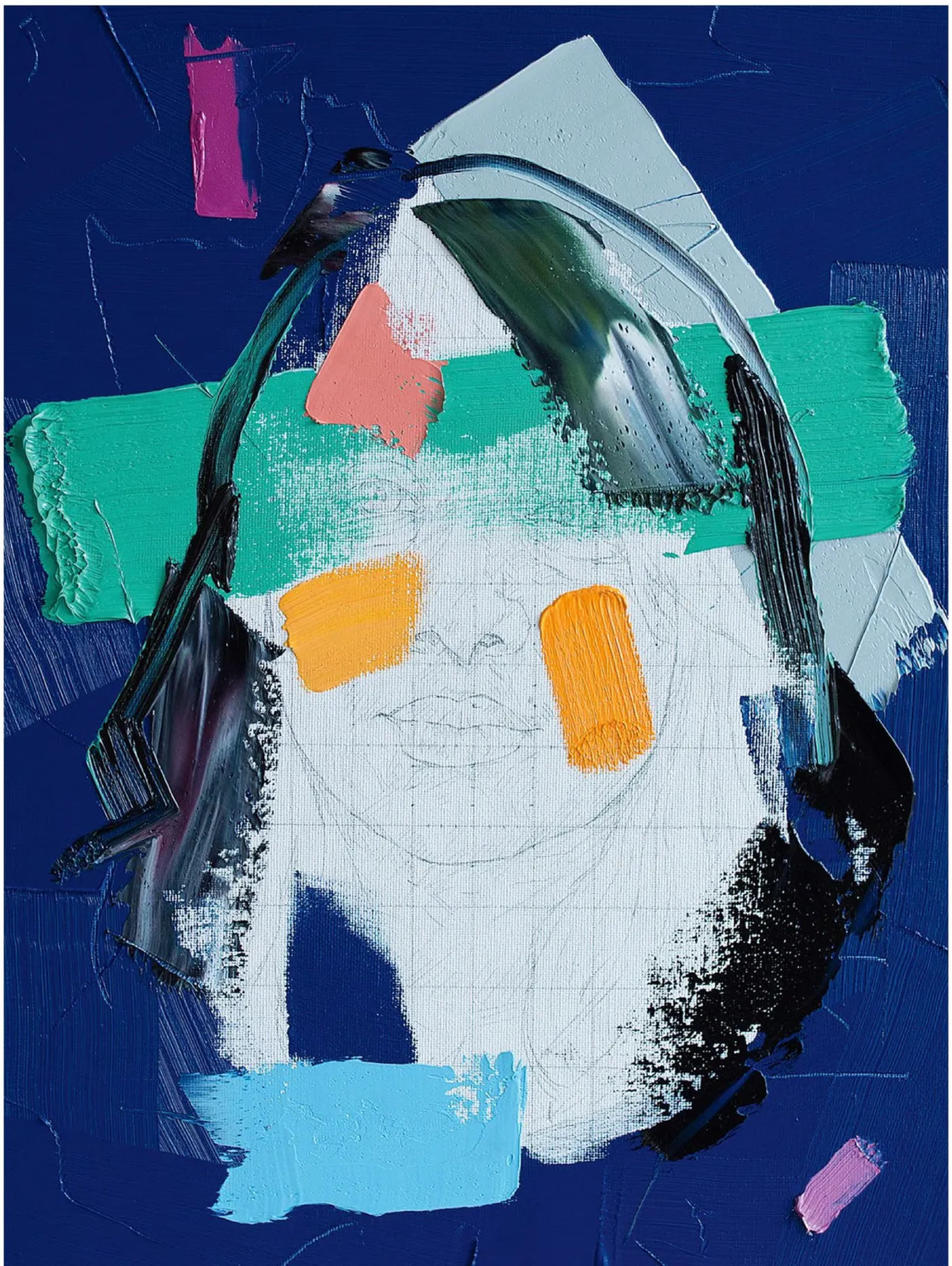
Carefully consider where your marks begin and end in relation to the overall composition and their neighbours. For example, in the image above, the grey smear ends near where the green mark will overlap, so I've ended the green mark on the left side of the canvas so they're not both pointing – and therefore leading the eye in the same direction, as this is dull for the viewer.

Clear vision

Give space around the eyes when plotting colours on a face. If you get too close, you may find it difficult to get your brushes and palette knives in there, and things will quickly get rather muddy.





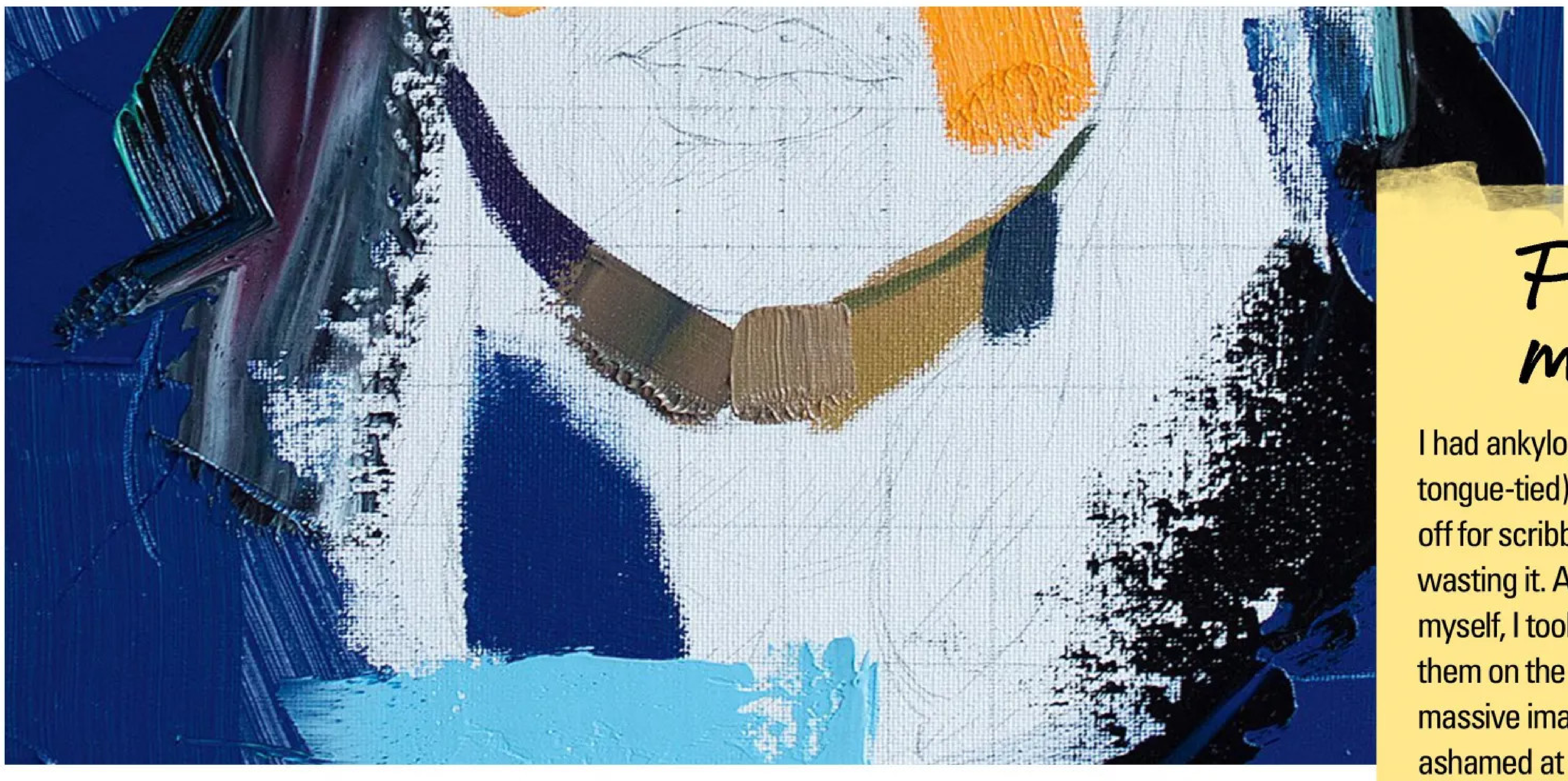


4 ▲ Use your grid

A lot of the hair has been covered by the background now, so I'm going to add a few gestures in so it doesn't become completely lost. I can use the existing grid to gauge where the hair goes. You can even use the measurements of your grid to retrace areas that have become smothered with paint.

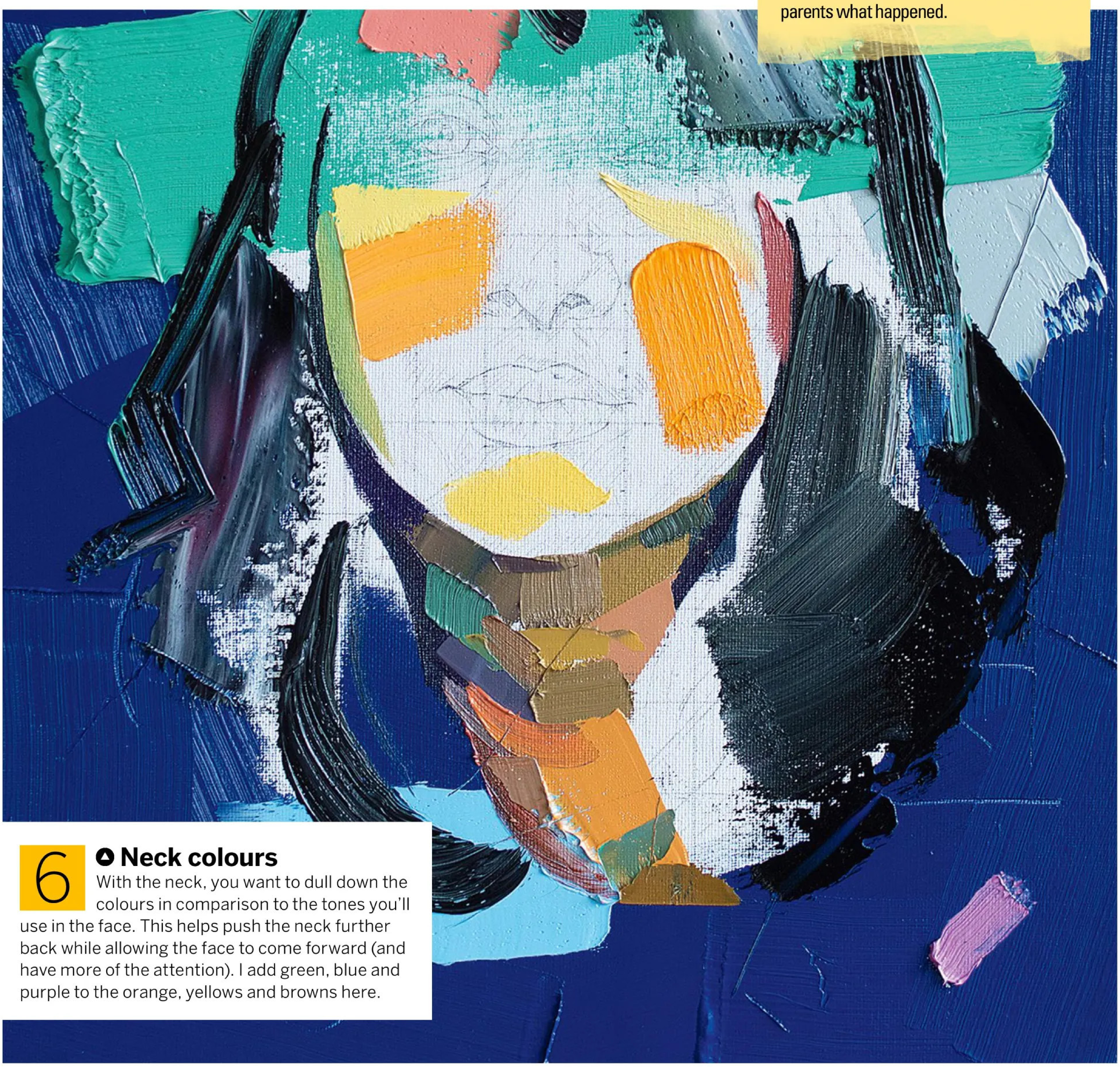
5 ◀ Shake up your routine

You don't have to follow the same process each time when painting. You might put the darkest and lightest tones in first to understand the range you're working with. Perhaps you paint a few areas to understand what palette you'll need to harmonise. Or perhaps you'll do something completely different! It's good to shake up routine.



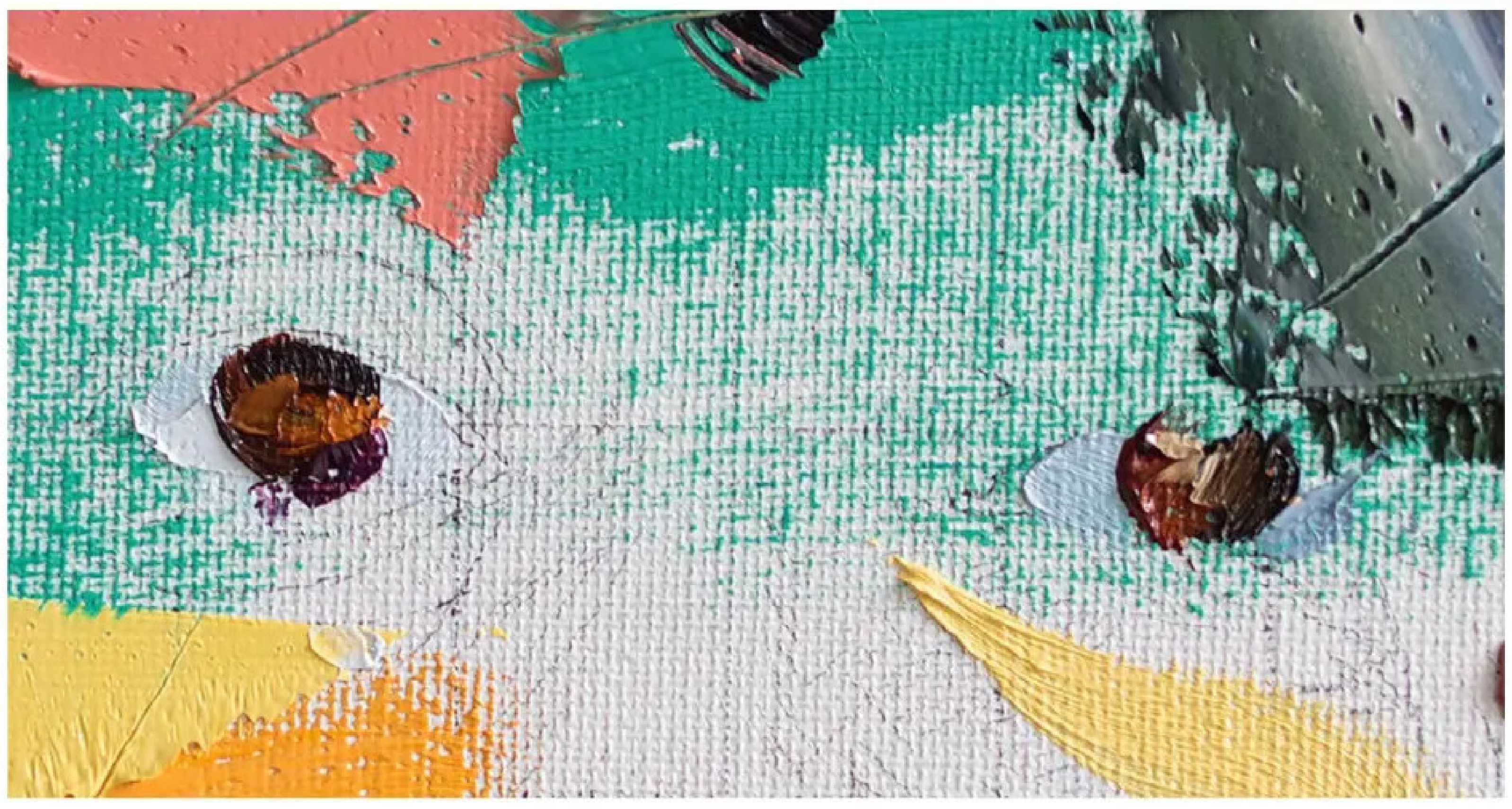
Finding my voice

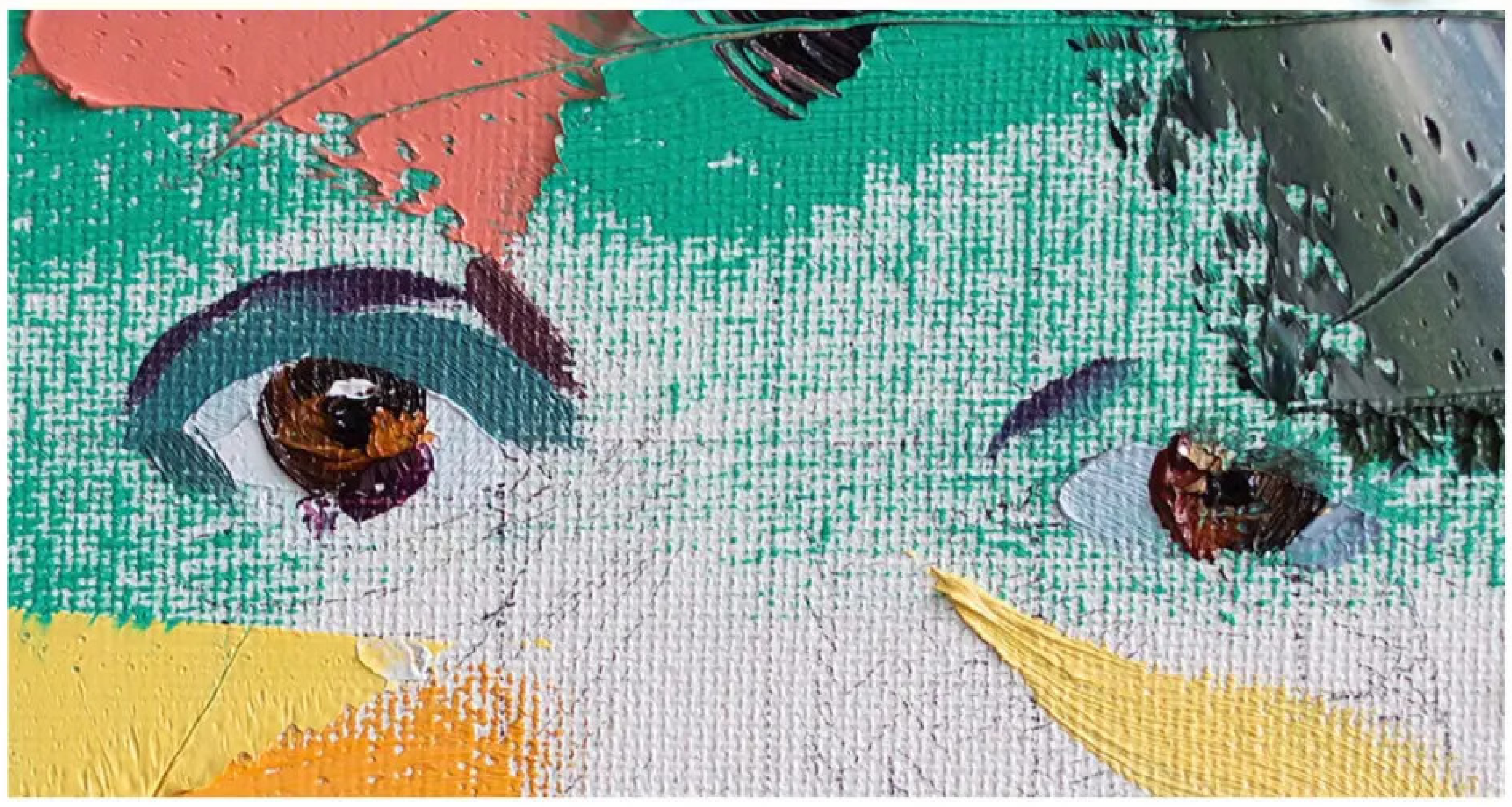
I had ankyloglossia as a kid (aka tongue-tied). One day my teacher told me off for scribbling over loads of paper and wasting it. As it was difficult to explain myself, I took the sheets and arranged them on the floor. They made one massive image. The teacher was so ashamed at scolding me she told my parents what happened.

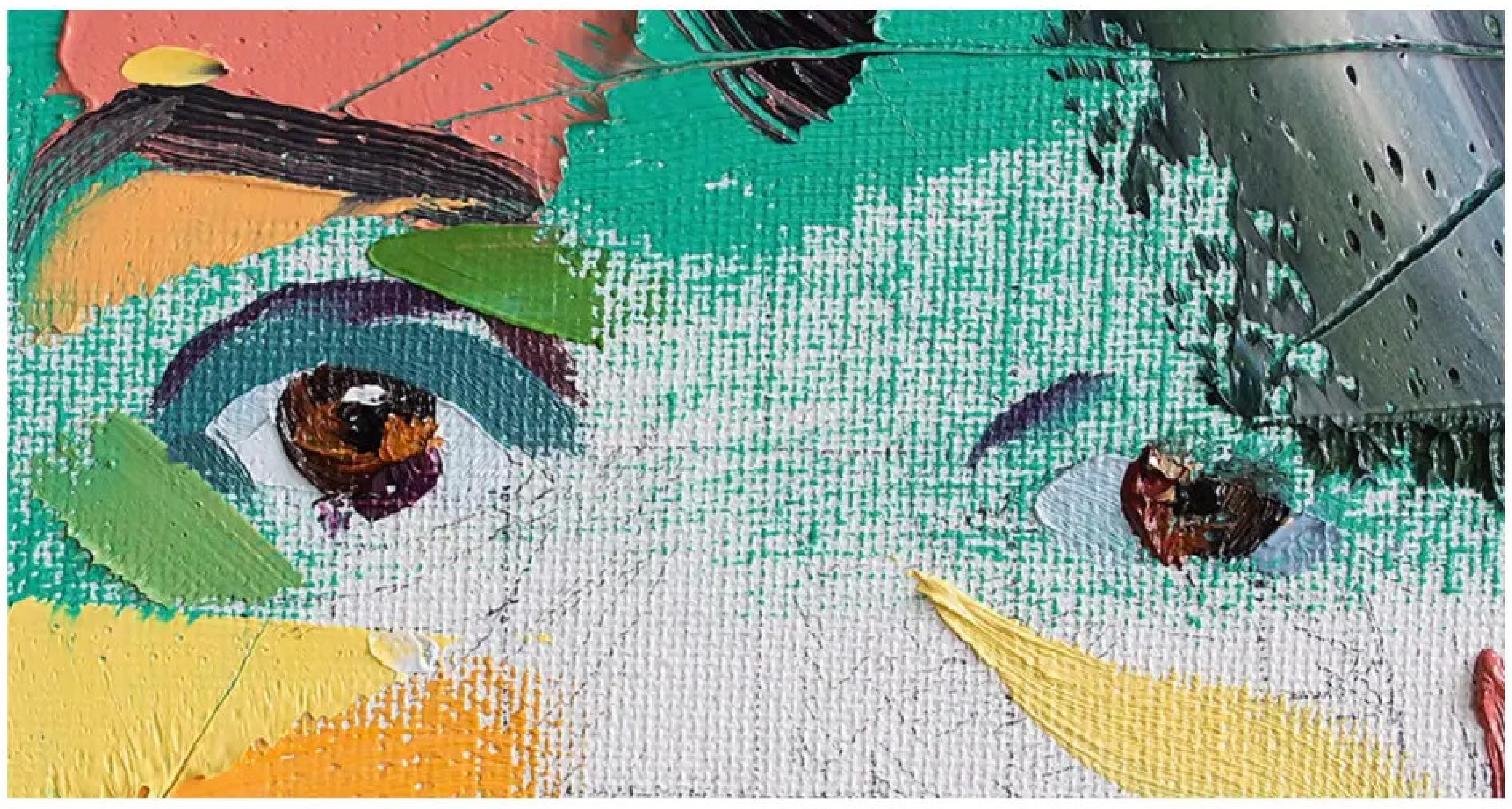


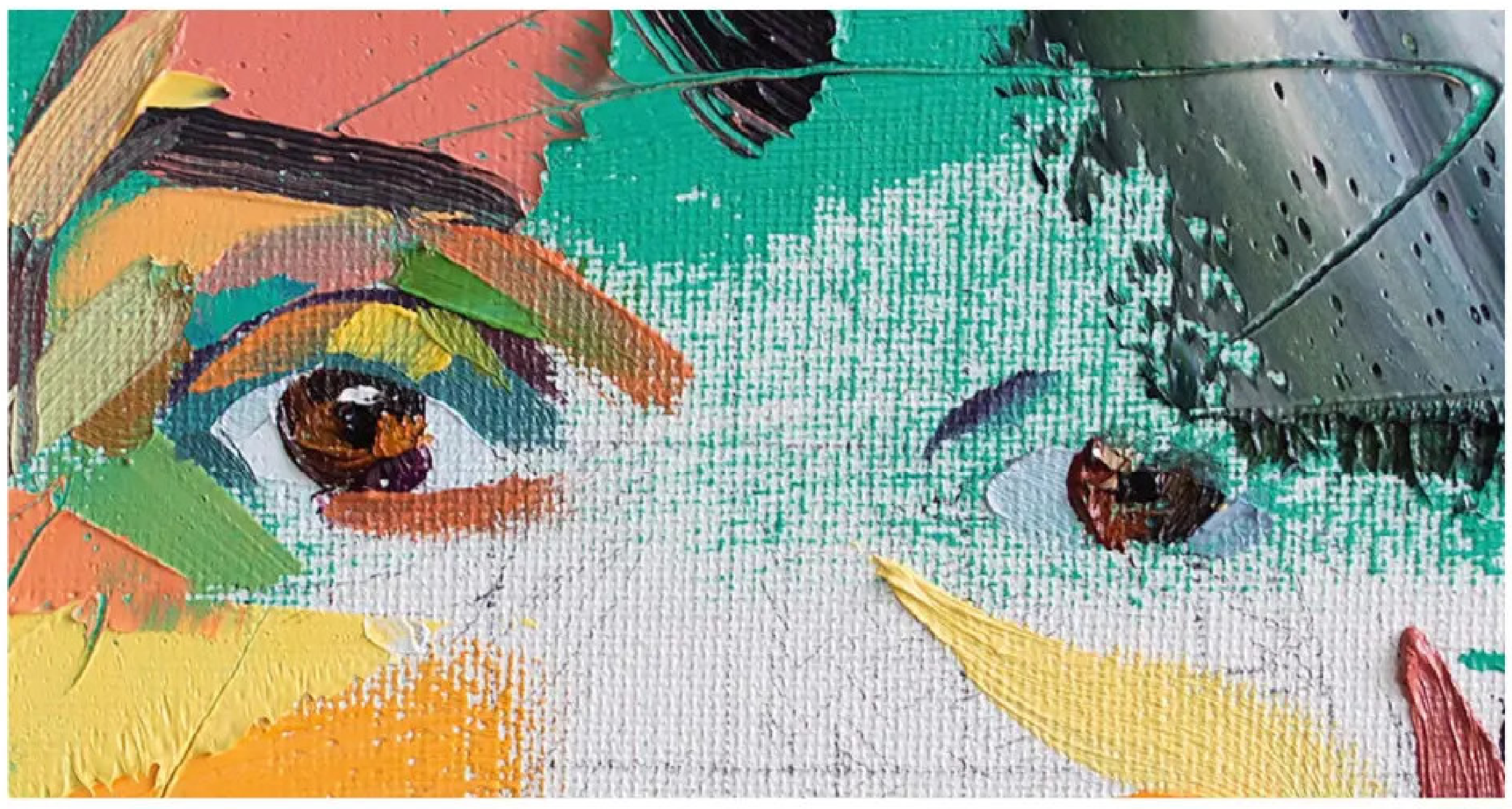
6 Neck colours

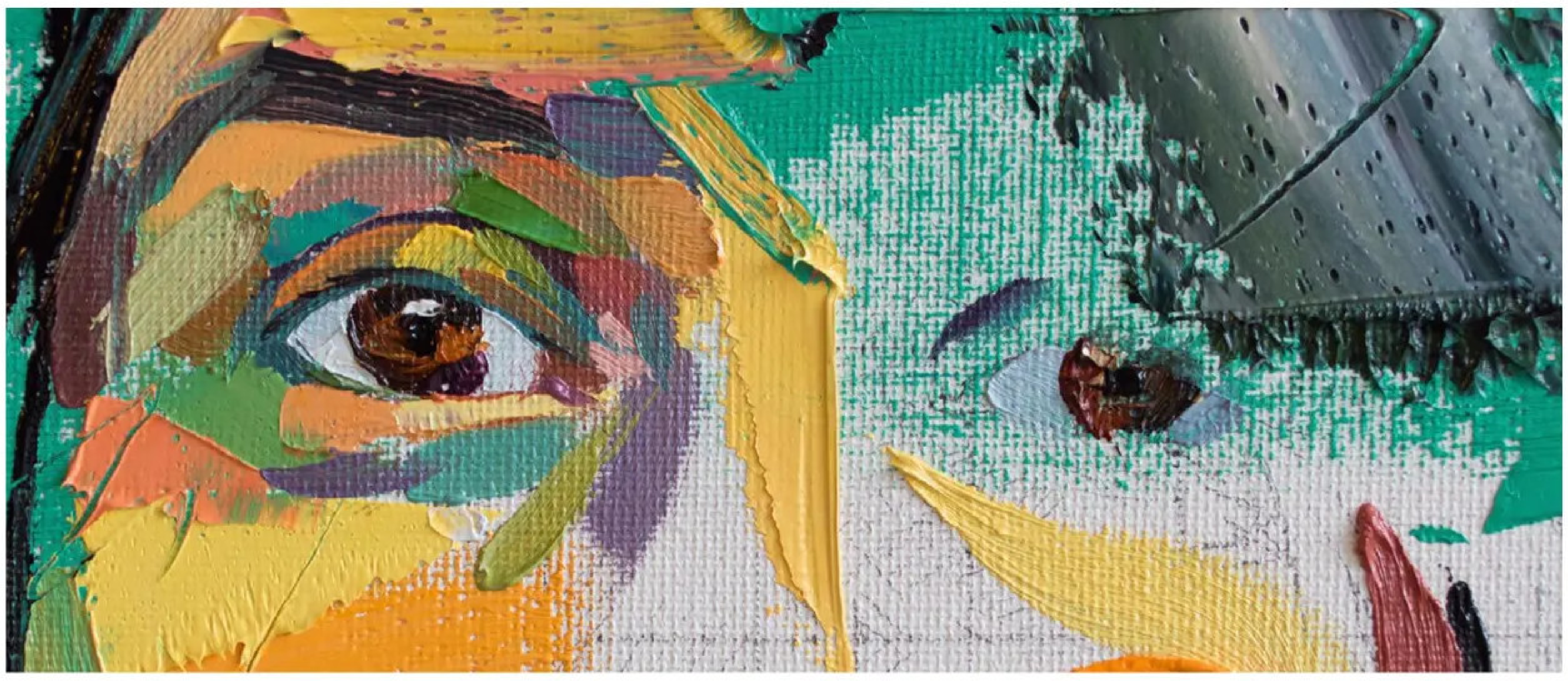
With the neck, you want to dull down the colours in comparison to the tones you'll use in the face. This helps push the neck further back while allowing the face to come forward (and have more of the attention). I add green, blue and purple to the orange, yellows and browns here.











7

Paint the eyes

Do the whites, the inner then outer iris and pupil, highlight, and finish with the edges of the eyelids. The whites are not white, they are variations of grey, and they are never of equal tone either side of the iris nor from left to right eyeball. Be careful when placing the pupil.

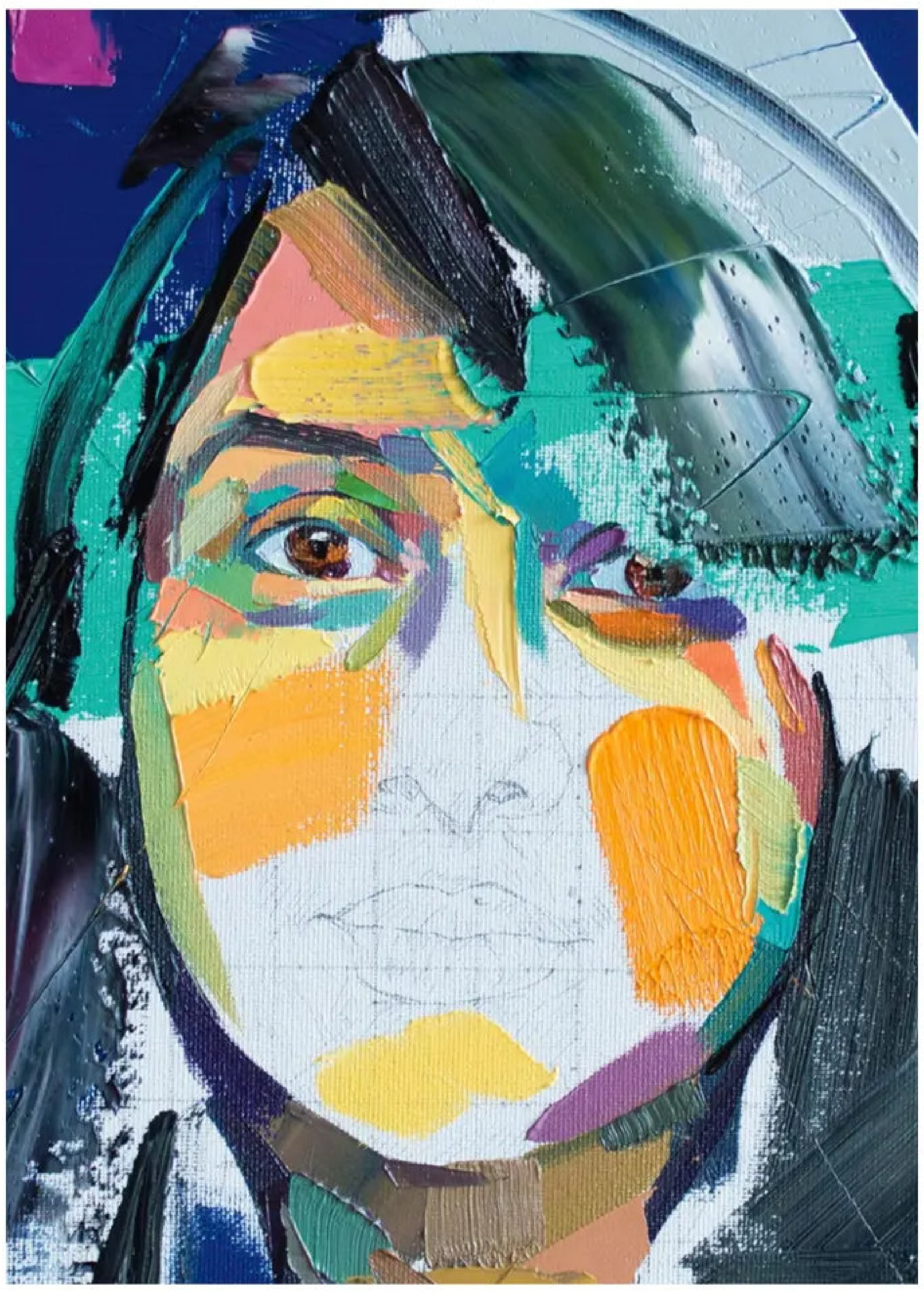
8

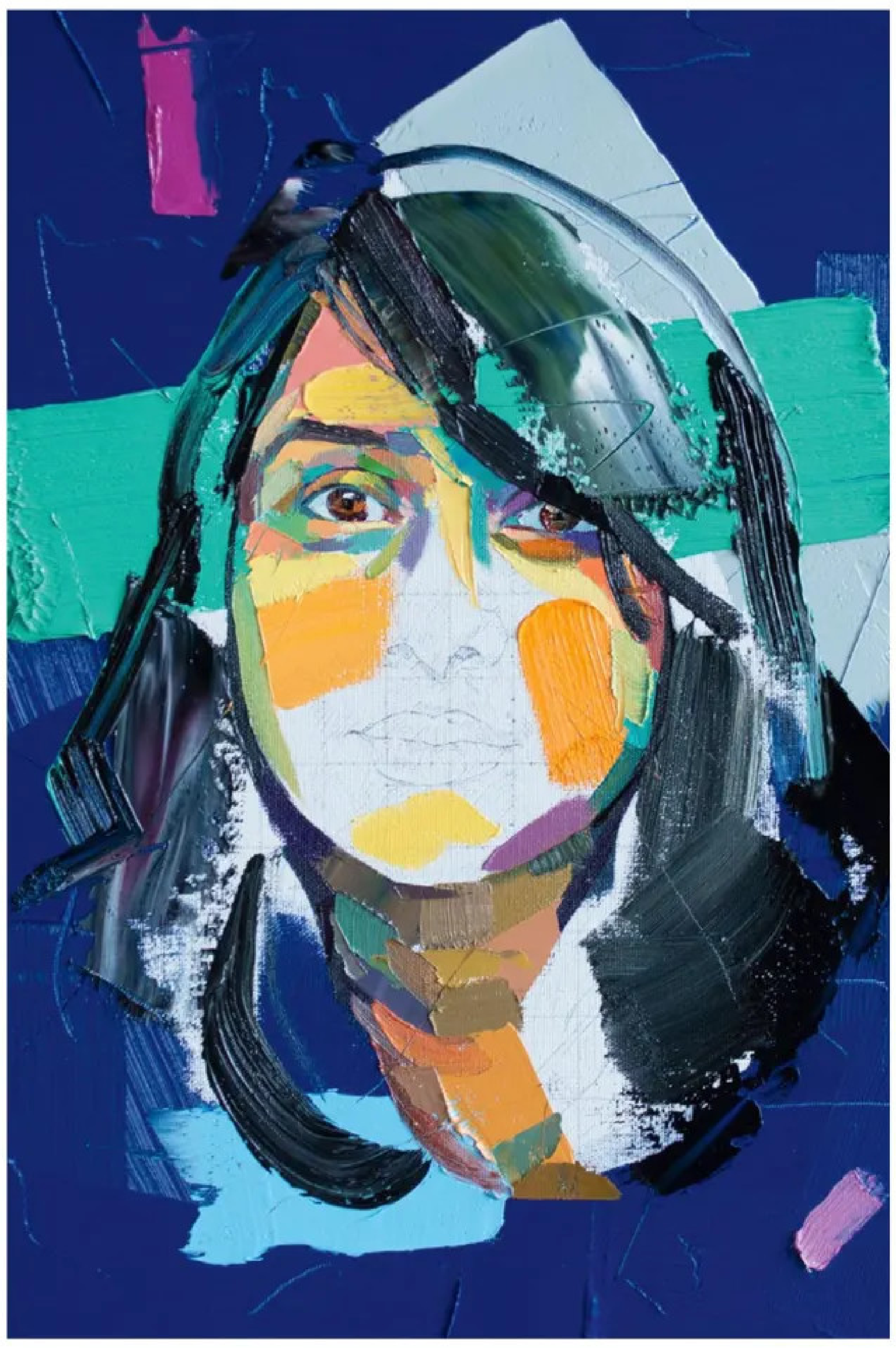
Use your grid

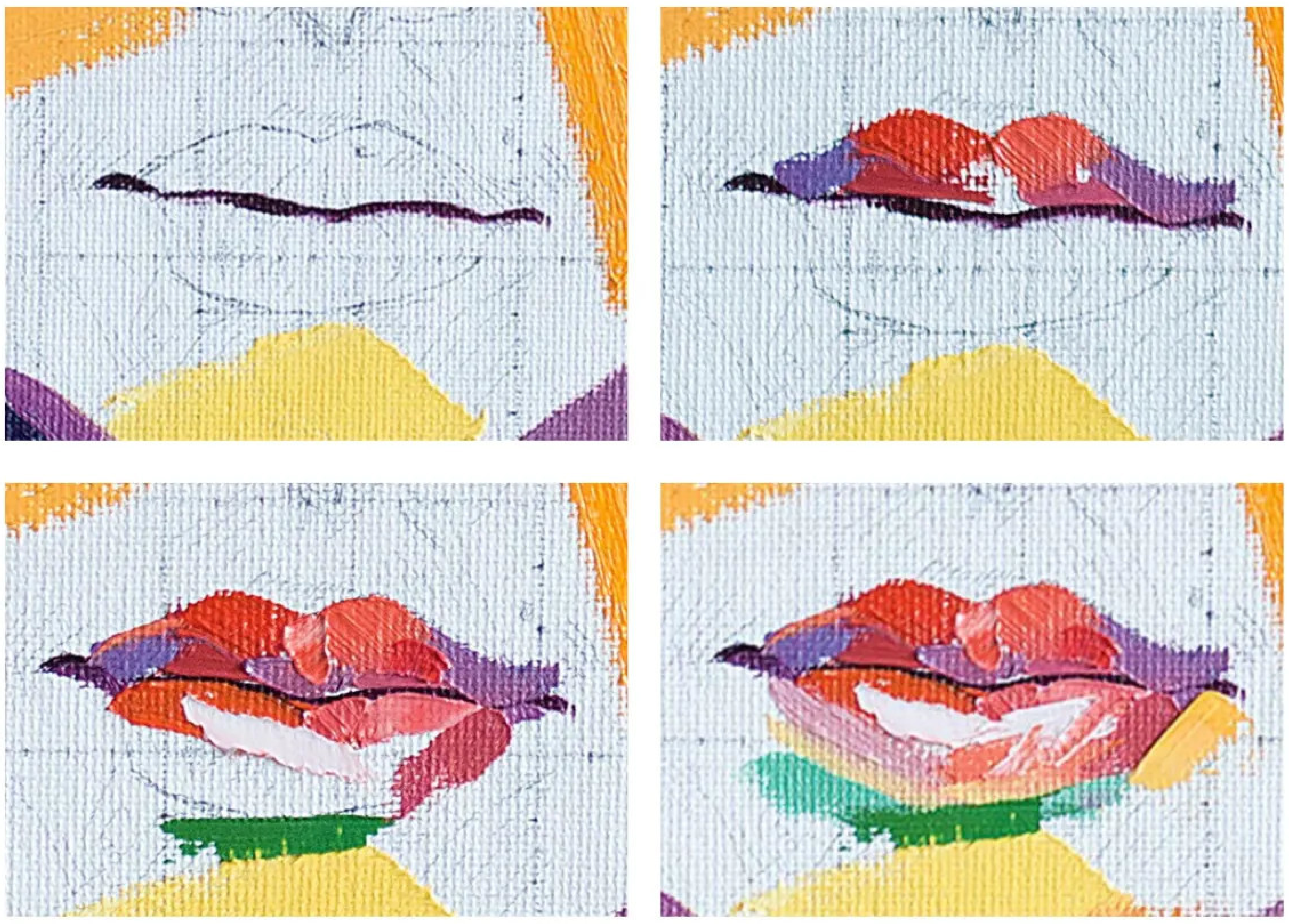
Before I can put in the fringe, have to finish off that left cheek and jaw as it goes underneath the hair (if I did it the other way, it will look like the hair is under the flesh). I'll finish the rest of the hair when I've done the face.

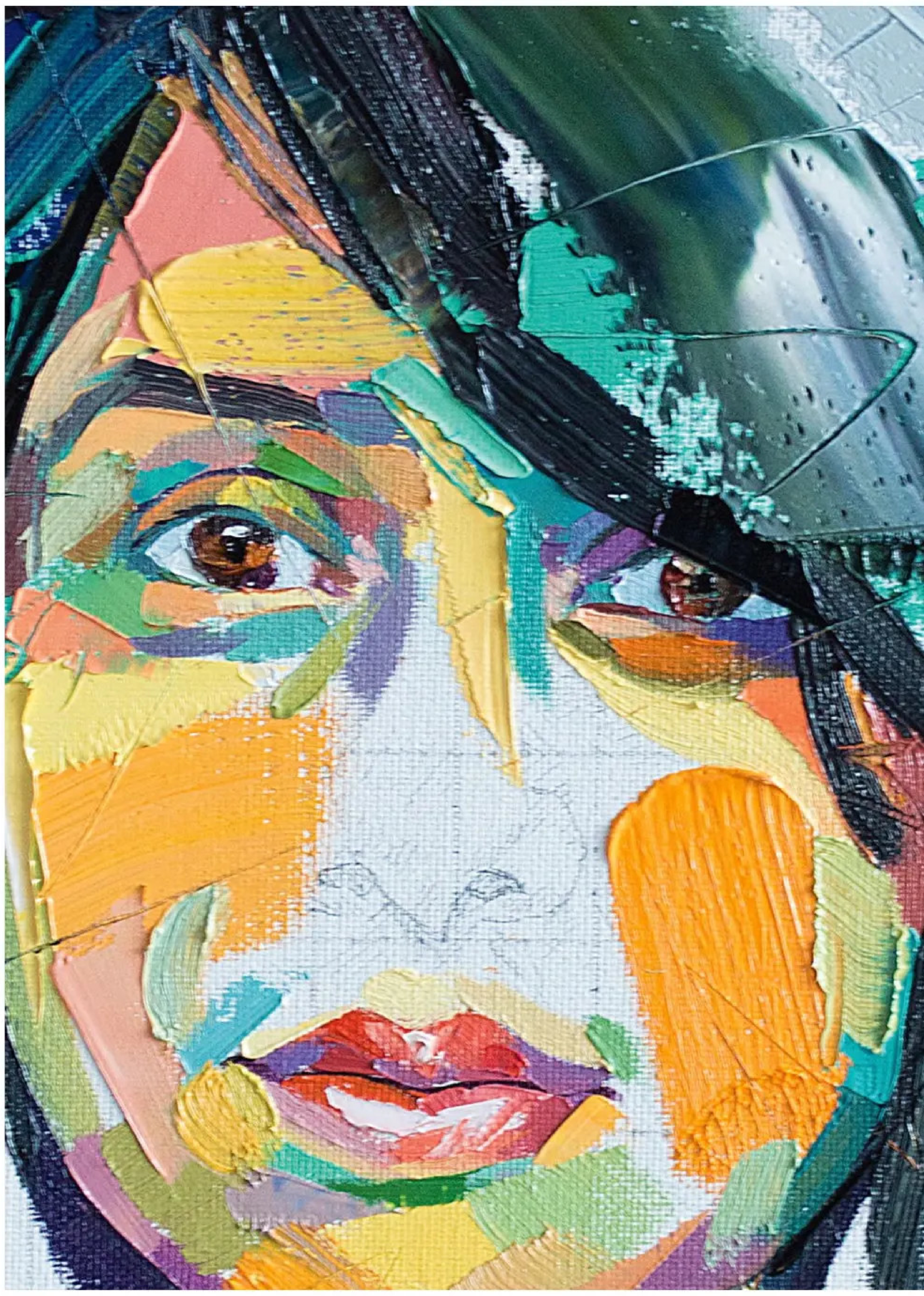
Keeping it clear

Technique can be learnt over time. I think one of the hardest issues for artists in their work is clarity. People's expectations and 'what sells' are slippery slopes that reduce your individuality.





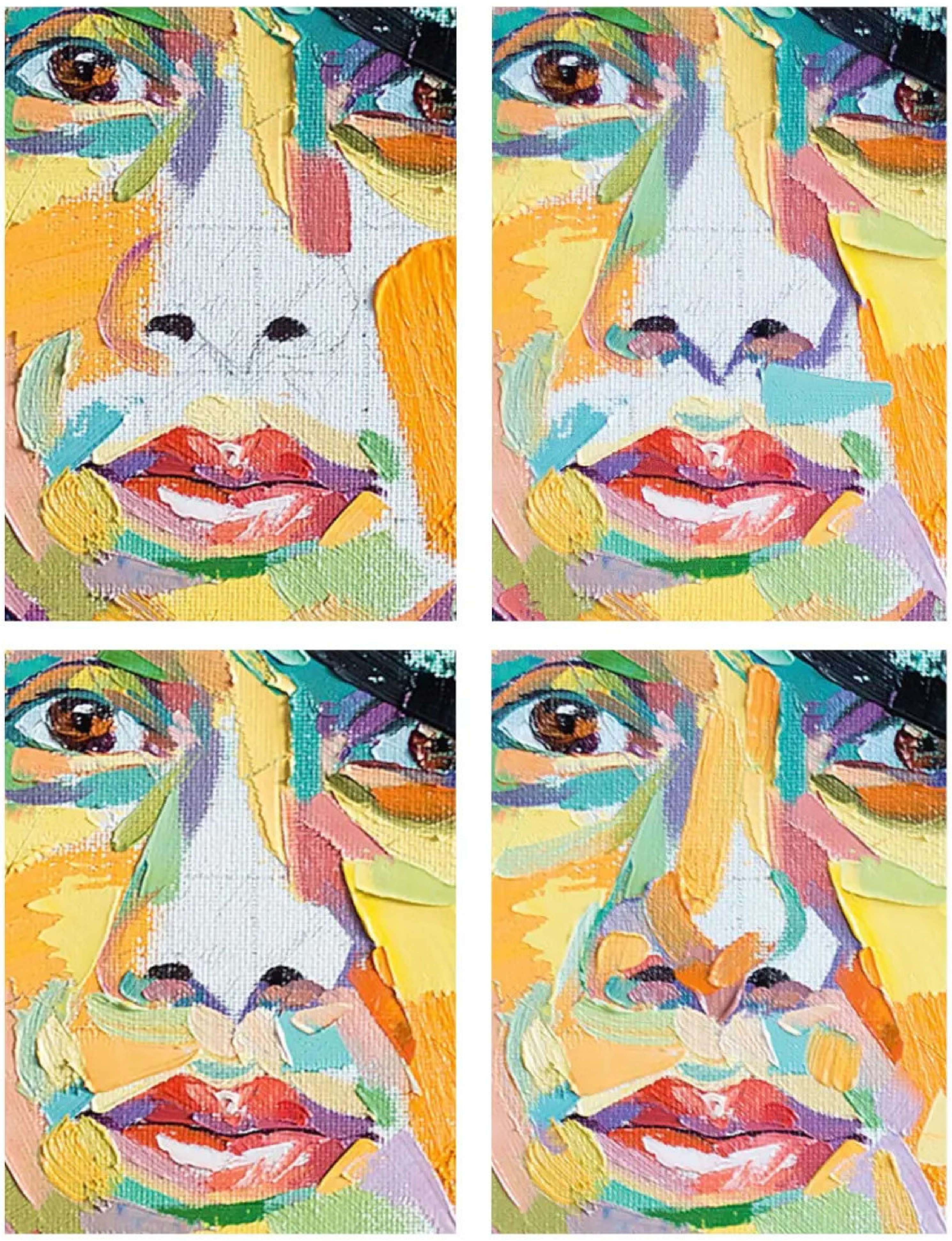


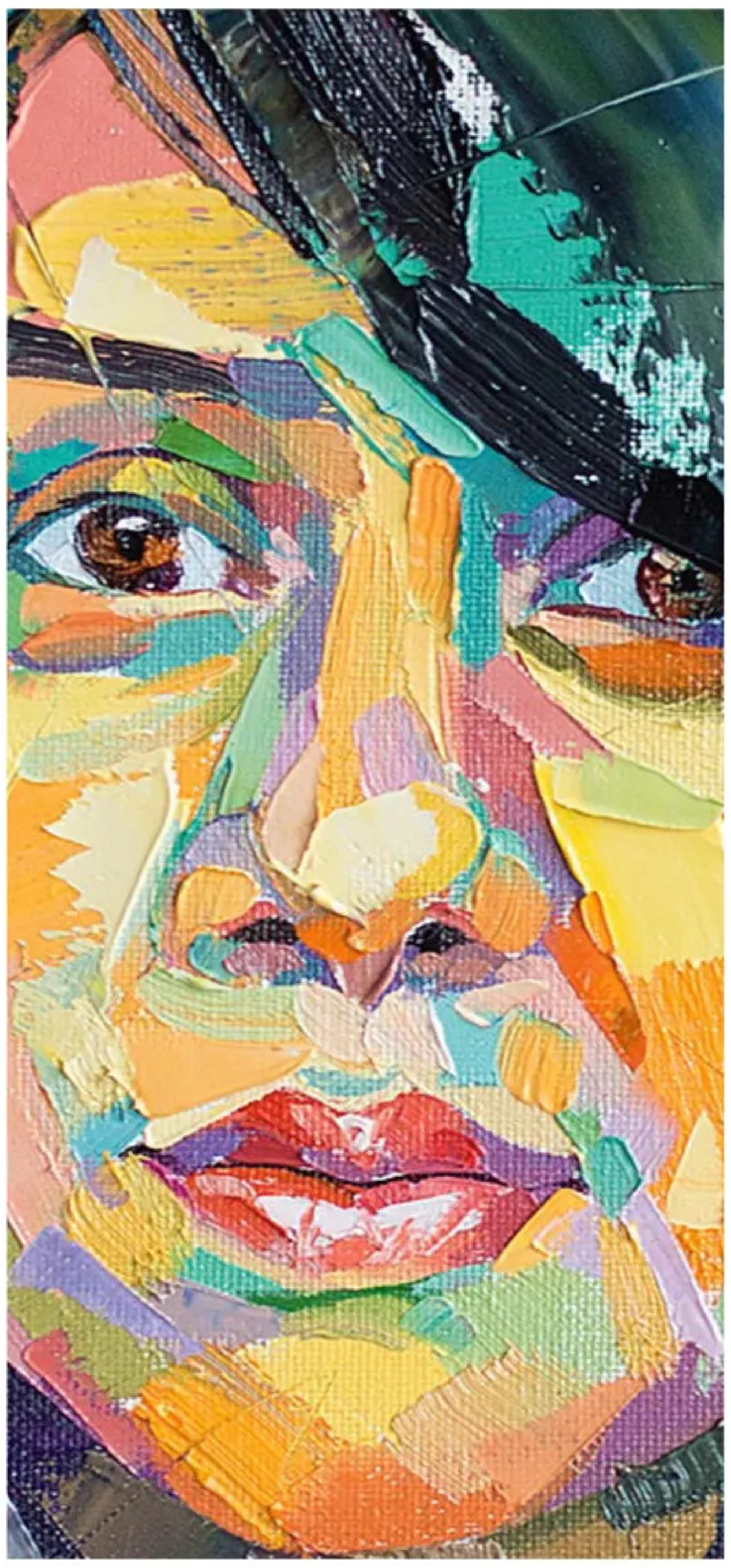


> “As lips tend to range from purple, pink and red-orange, it’s good to add a bit of green around them”

9 Work on lips

Do the dark bit where the lips meet first, then upper lip, then lower lip. Work from the sides inwards as lips protrude from the centre towards the viewer. As lips tend to range from purple, pink and red-orange, it’s good to add a bit of green into the shadows of the flesh around them.





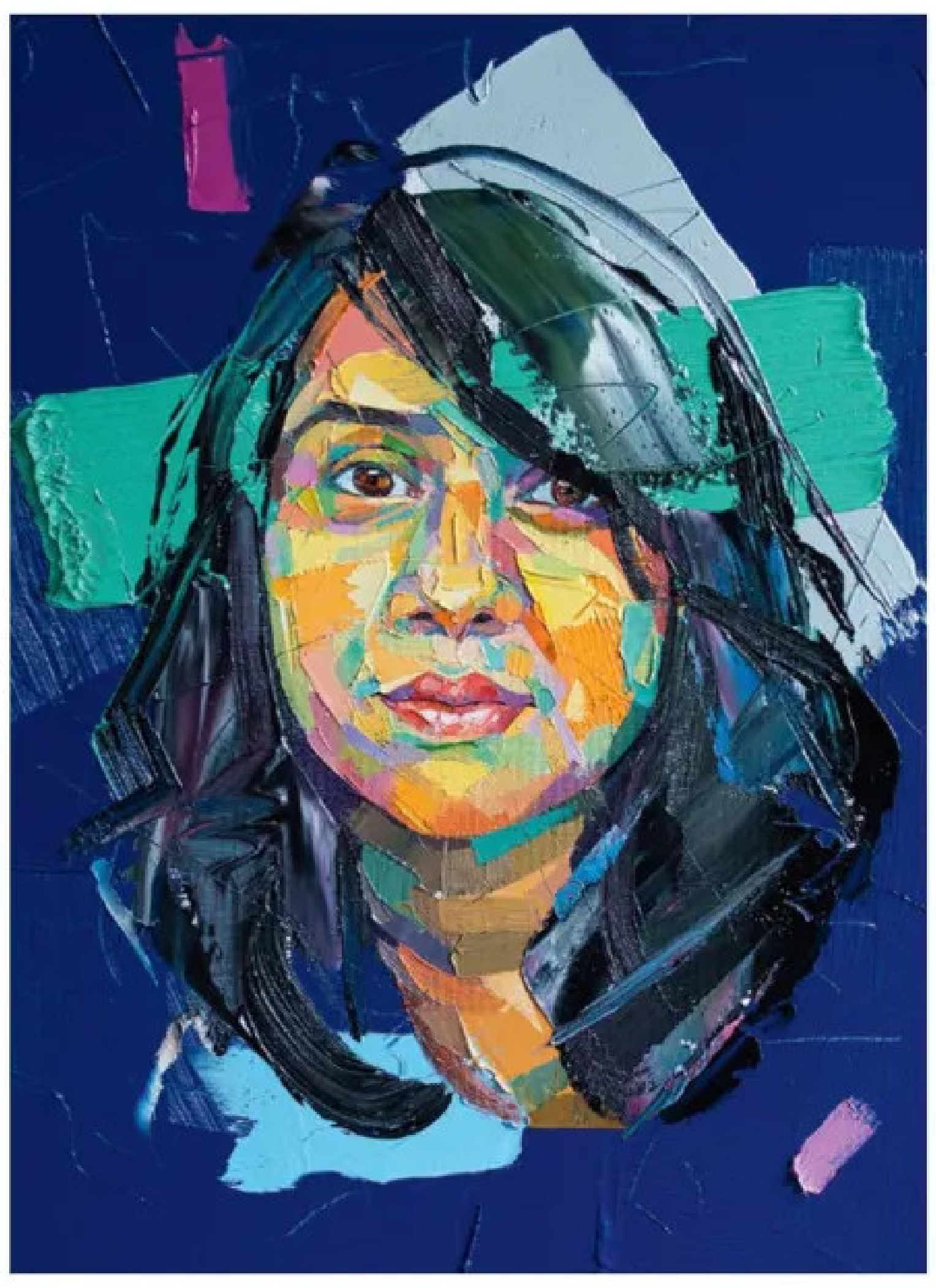
10 Nose job

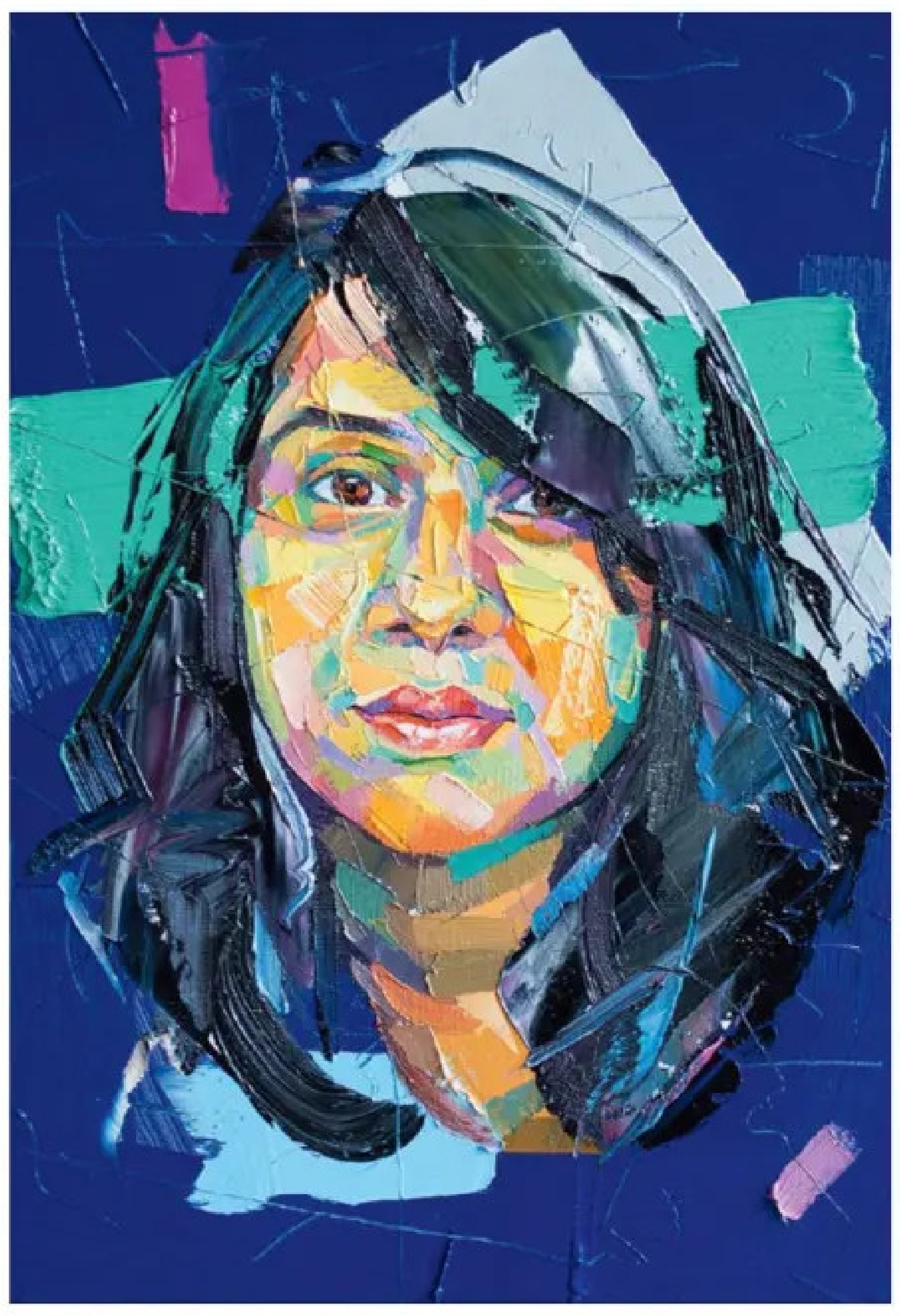
Fill in the holes first (they’re never completely black), then the outlines of the nostrils, then work from the inside out of the nostrils (including the shadows), then do the bridge and finish with the ‘bobble’ of the nose. Usually, one of the brightest highlights in the piece is caught on the nose.

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

11 Final tweaks

Stand back and examine your work. Are the shadows and highlights in the right place? Do the contours of the forms accurately describe the face? Adjust as required. Don't overwork. Be patient. Don't compromise. Are the eyes looking in the right direction? Be careful if you need to amend this at this stage.





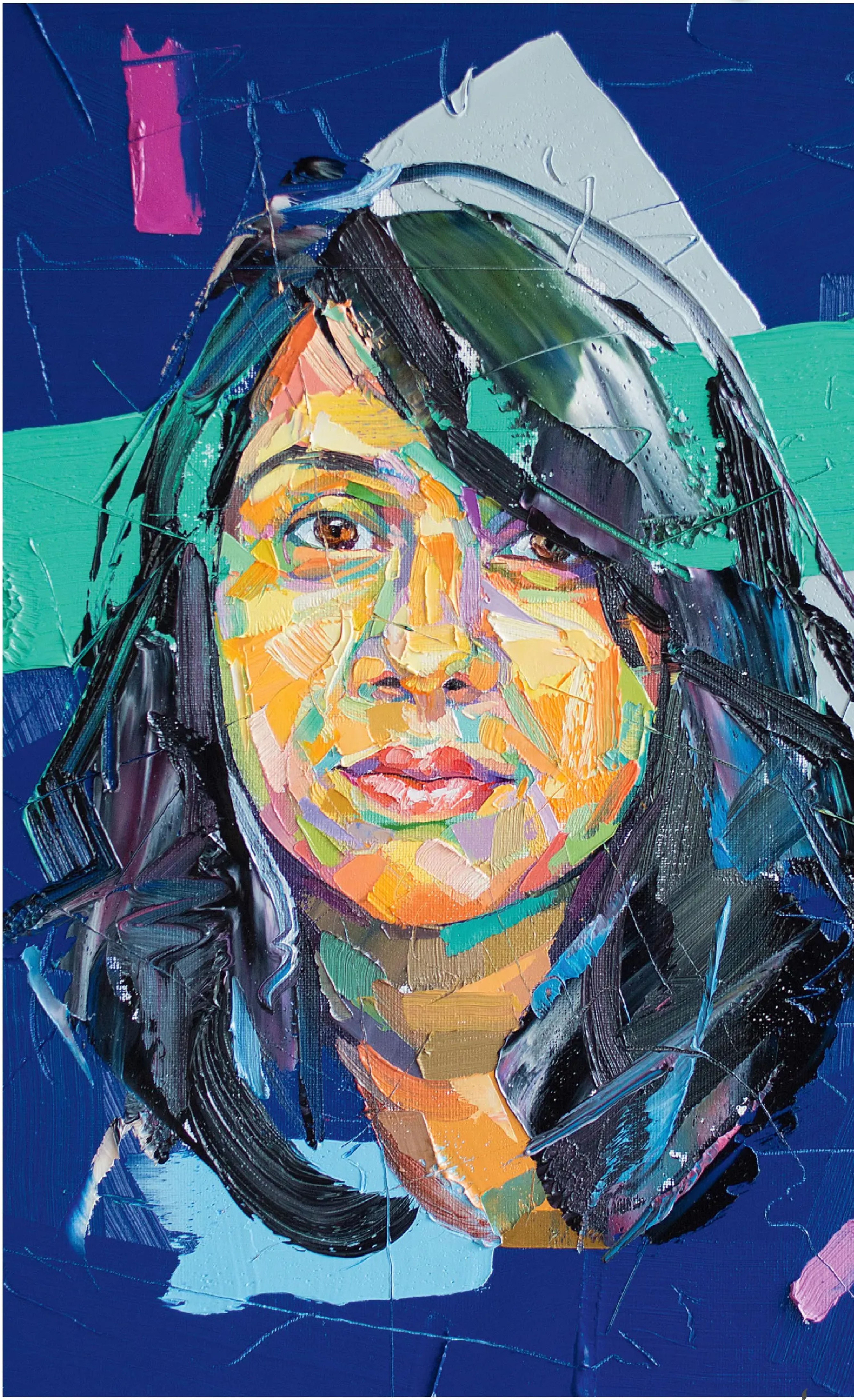


Image: Alamy

Materials

- Colourfix Pastel Primer in Raw Sienna
- Red conté crayon
- Unison pastels

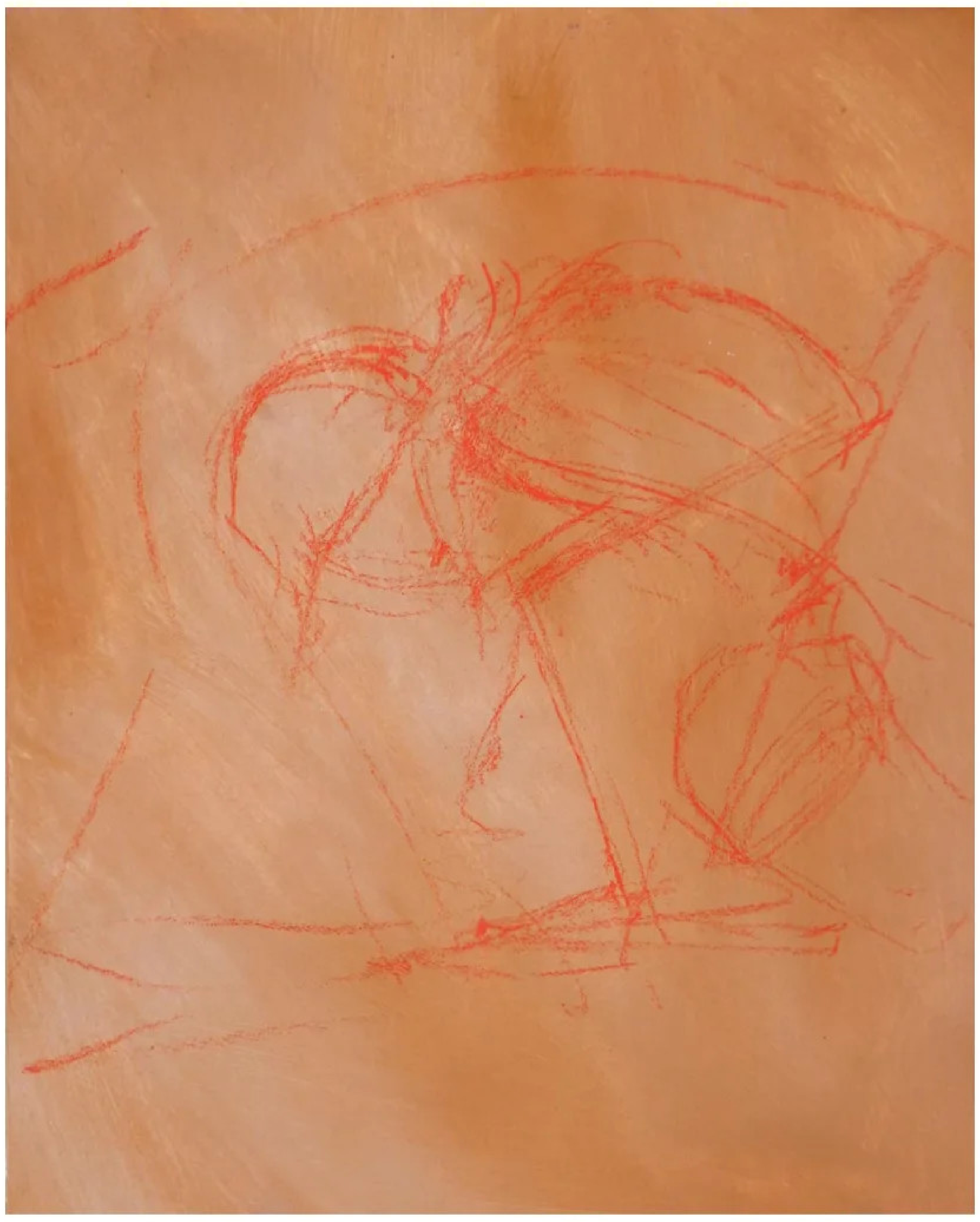
Capture movement

Want to bring some life into your people pastels? **Rebecca de Mendonça** reveals how to add movement to your scenes

Soft pastels are a lovely medium for capturing the energy of a moving figure. This little boy digging in the sand is changing his position constantly, and if you were watching him you wouldn't see much detail at all. However, you would feel the heat of the Sun, and the wind in your hair, which are all part of the moment's energy.

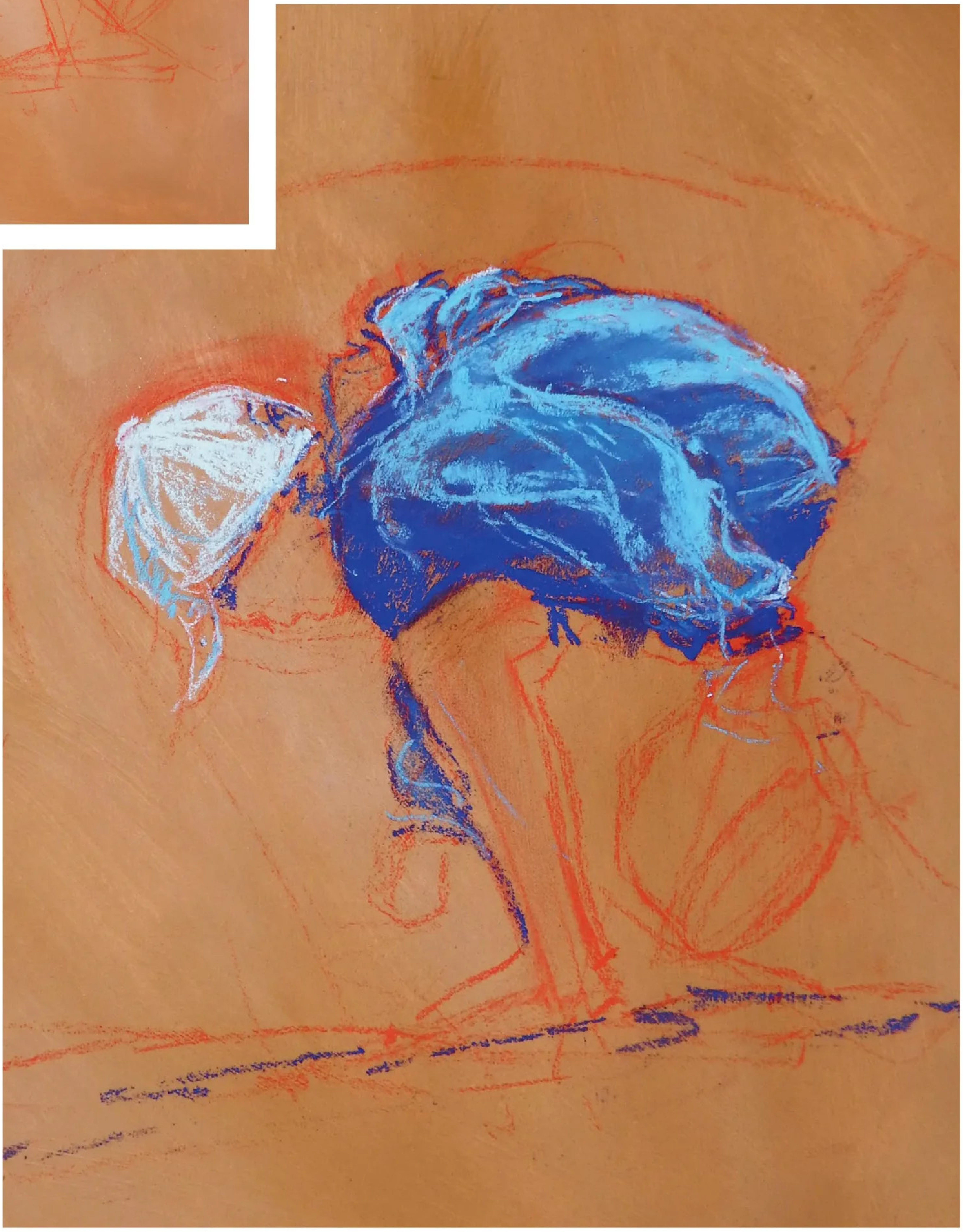
In this sort of scene, I vary my pastel marks by defining edges in places, but smudging and softening in others. With a basic knowledge of anatomy, the pose can be conveyed with a few lines, and then built up with marks made by twisting the pastels on their edges. By making quick marks, and thinking about the flow of the movements, and the way his clothes hang and fold, I can inject energy into the piece as I work. Then to emphasise it, I smudge extra marks around him, as though the air itself is being disturbed by his digging frenzy!

About **REBECCA**
Exeter, UK
Rebecca co-founded The New Pastel School and teaches in the UK and Italy. Her book Pastels for the Absolute Beginner will be published in October 2019.
www.rebeccademendonca.co.uk



1 ◀ Create gestural lines

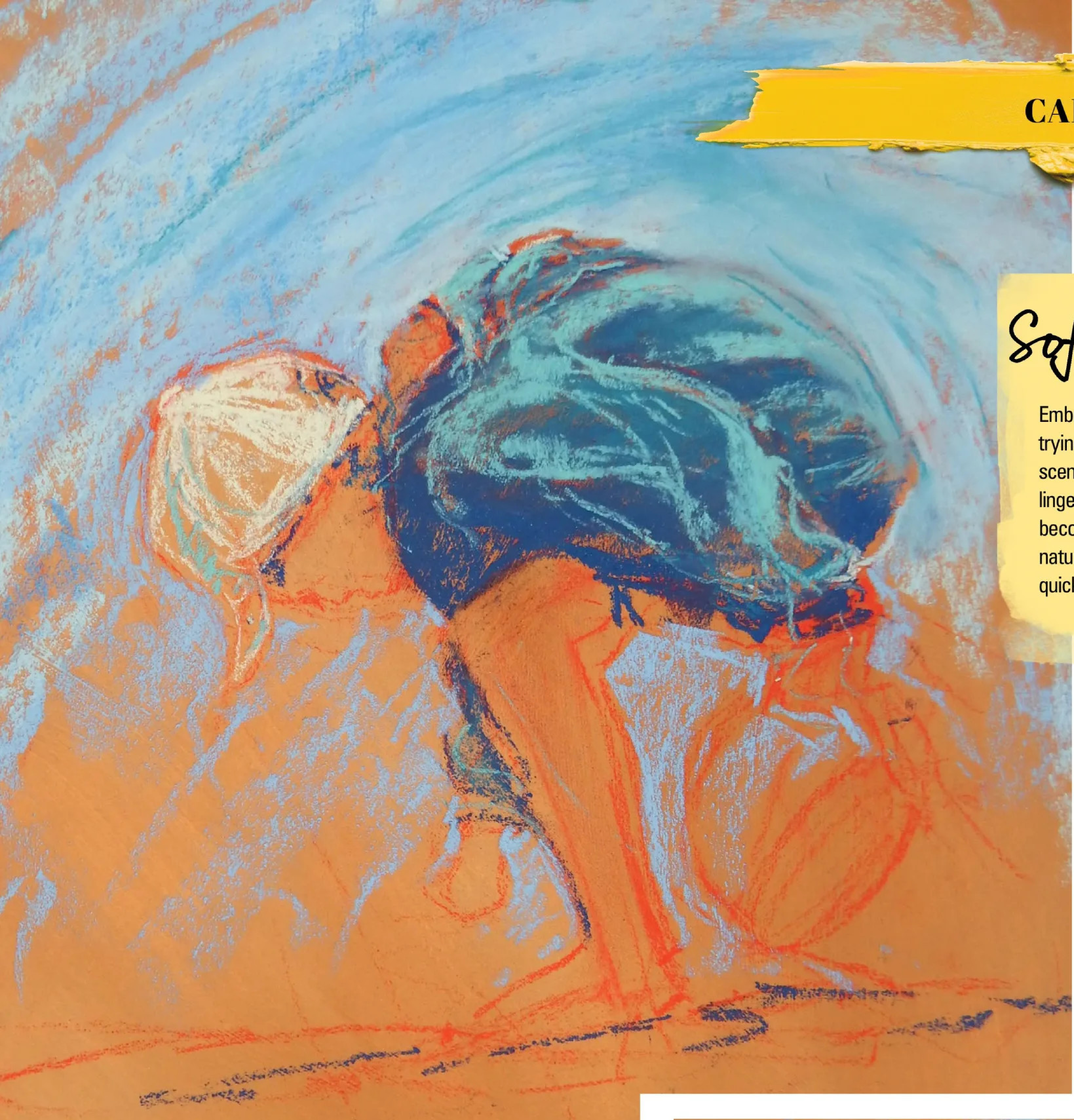
I start with gestural lines in Conté crayon on a mid-tone pastel paper, using a red ochre colour to give warmth under the skin tones. I think of drawing a stick figure, focusing on angles and proportions. The curve of the back and angle of the head are important, as is the line of the leg. Sketchy marks around the figure give it life.



2 ▶ Block in colours

I firm up the figure with Unison pastels, blocking in solid areas. My main focus is to get a feel for the solidity of the body, and to keep my work loose. The primed raw sienna surface colour is a great base for the skin tones. Less is more in work like this, so I hint at the ground and bucket.

> “The primed raw sienna surface colour is a great base for the skin tones”



Softly does it

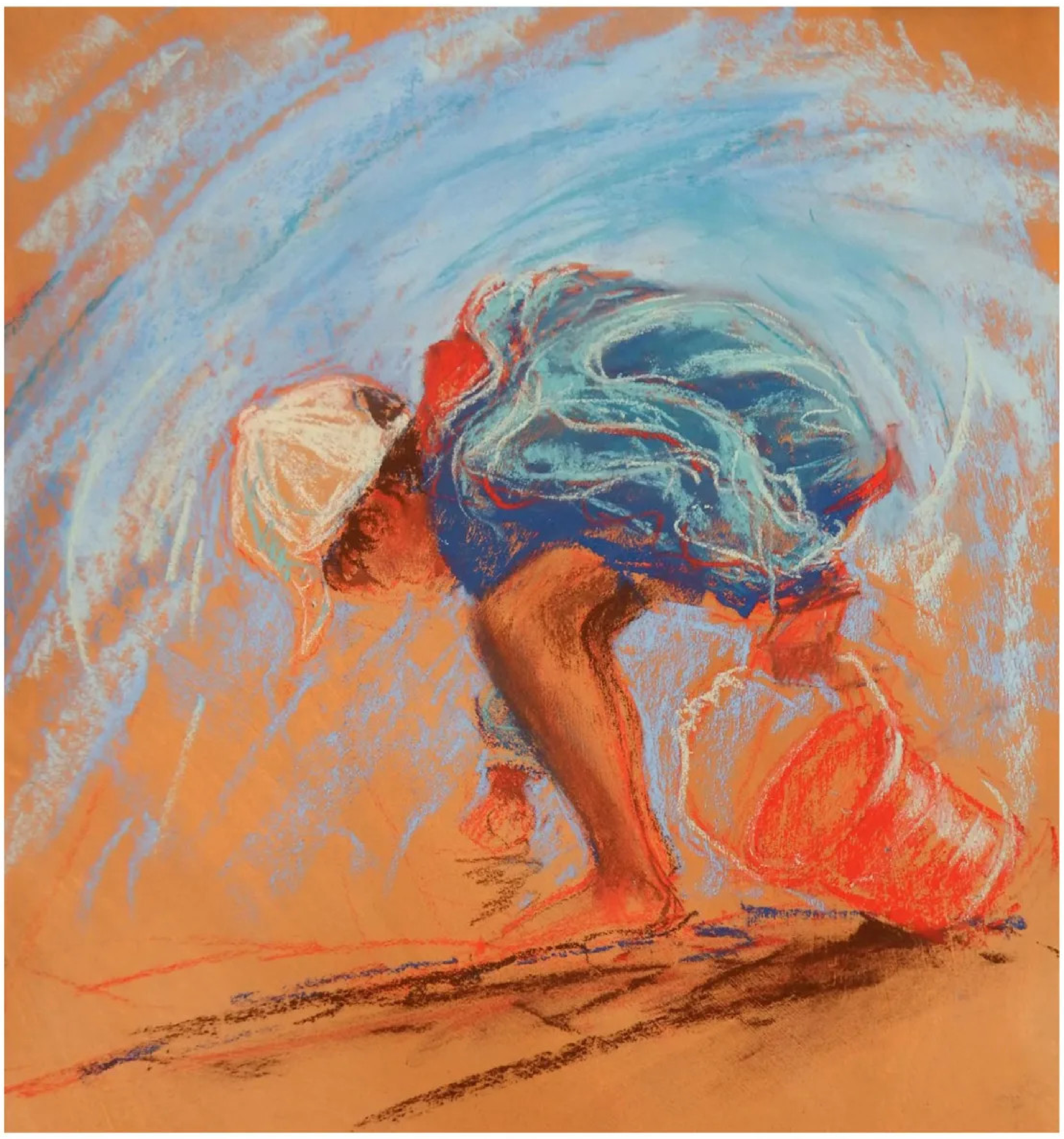
Embrace the gestural look when trying to express motion in your scenes – if you press too hard or linger too much, your strokes will become stilted and it will halt the natural flow of your scene. A light, quick touch will be most effective!

3 ◀ Add context

I work some background around the figure, using broad, sweeping strokes in directions that indicate the flow of movement, but not dwelling on detail. I go up to the edges of the figure where I need some precision, but leave other areas with little colour added. I sketch some hair around the face, but try not to be too detailed.

4 ▶ Add accents

I bring in red accents, hint at detail on clothing, and add shadows to skin, clothes and the ground. At this stage I am trying to make the figure look three dimensional but not to overwork the piece. I hint at the hand and reflection behind the leg. Flicks of colour around the piece unify it and create a feeling of movement and action.



Work with a limited palette

Rob Lunn details how you can increase harmony in your colour mixes by stripping back your palette to just two reds, two blues and two yellows

Materials

- ☐ Canvas boards, 5″ x 7″ & 8″ x 10″
- ☐ Rosemary & Co. Ivory short-handled Flats sizes: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8,10 & size 2 rigger
- ☐ Michael Harding oil paints
- ☐ Kitchen roll
- ☐ Old Masters Brush Cleaner & Preserver (+ TLC)
- ☐ Bartoline Brush Cleaner

About **ROB LUNN**

Bath, UK

Rob is a self-taught painter, and loves to paint in oils. His influences are Vincent van Gogh, Caravaggio and Ilya Repin. He has taught art workshops since 2012.

www.roblunn.co.uk

Light seems colourless, but it is in fact made up of the full spectrum of colours. When we see the yellow of a pepper, it is because all the other colours in the spectrum are absorbed by the pepper, only the yellow light rays bounce off the pepper and are picked up by our eyes. So, what we are actually painting is not the pepper, but the light between the pepper and our eyes.

By re-creating the spectrum on our palette, the whole range of colours that occur within nature are opened up to us. The spectrum can be best represented by 12 colours, each representing a step around the full spectrum. The colour directly opposite a colour on the wheel is its complementary – that is to say, when put next to each other they make each other seem more colourful. When these colours are mixed, however, they cancel each other out and lower the saturation (or vibrancy) of each other and create a grey. To really push this method though, we're going to reduce the palette to just six vital colours, plus white. Simply two blues, two reds and two yellows.

With these colours you will be able to mix your own blacks and browns (these will be explained later), plus all the complementary colours we've omitted from the spectrum. The only downside of using a limited palette is not having the high levels of saturation you get from straight-out-of-the-tube colour, but nature isn't always that intense, depending on your subject, and the greater feeling of colour harmony outweighs this. All the paints recommended below are from Michael Harding and classed as non-toxic, plus I try not to use harmful spirits or additives. See the brief colour descriptions on these pages to find out more about them.

A Ultramarine Blue

Michael Harding series 1

Ultramarine Blue is a lovely mid-blue with great warm tendencies. Before the discovery of this synthetic version in the 1820s, Lapis Lazuli Ultramarine Blue was one of the most expensive pigments in the world, hailing from the mountains of Afghanistan, and more expensive pound for pound than gold. The colour was reserved for only the most important people in paintings, and was traditionally the blue of Mary, mother of Jesus. It has an average drying time, leans more towards transparent and has excellent lightfastness. It produces lovely greens and beautiful violets, too. This is often my go-to blue for mixes.

A
B
C
Ultramarine Blue
Phthalocyanine Blue
Bright Yellow Lake

B Phthalocyanine Blue Lake

Michael Harding series 2

Derived from Chlorinated Copper in 1935, Phthalocyanine (or 'Phthalo') Blue Lake is a powerhouse blue and is seen as a modern replacement for Prussian Blue. 'A little dab will do you' is definitely recommended, as its extremely high tinting strength can easily overpower a mix. It is an intense blue that dries quickly and its transparency and excellent lightfastness make it great for glazes, but just watch how much you put in! This is a green-blue and great for those full-on greens that you really want to pop! Phthalo Blue Lake is a great wingman to Ultramarine Blue on your palette.

D Yellow Lake

Michael Harding series 1

Yellow Lake is a warmer version of Bright Yellow Lake and what I use instead of Cadmium Yellow on my palette, although again, it doesn't have the same covering power as Cadmium when layering. Yellow Lake is transparent but with a strong tint power and excellent lightfastness. As with its Bright cousin, Yellow Lake has a slow drying time, which makes it great for mixing colours you want work back into. It makes amazing strong oranges and mixes well for punchy bright greens, too.

F Alizarin Crimson

Michael Harding series 3

Alizarin Crimson is highly prized by portrait artists for the cool and smoky colour it adds to skin tones, although some have concerns about its lightfastness compared to more recent organic red pigments. I love the way Alizarin Crimson mixes with skin tones for depicting lips – it gives full and ruby tones without looking too 'painted on', making it ideal for male lips, where you might not want it to look like the subject is wearing lipstick. Although that depends on the subject – I'm still hoping for that commission to paint The Cure's Robert Smith! It's a good slow drier with good lightfastness and transparency.

C Bright Yellow Lake

Michael Harding series 1

Bright Yellow Lake is a powerful Arylide organic Lake pigment. It has a bottle green undertone when mixed and an incredibly high oil content and tinting strength. I use it as a non-toxic alternative to Cadmium Lemon Yellow, although it doesn't have the same covering strength when layered due to its high transparency. When you add Titanium White No.1 this yellow is almost luminous. With its high transparency and excellent lightfastness it's great for glazes, but it has a slow drying time. You might want to add a little Liquin to speed this up.

E Scarlet Lake

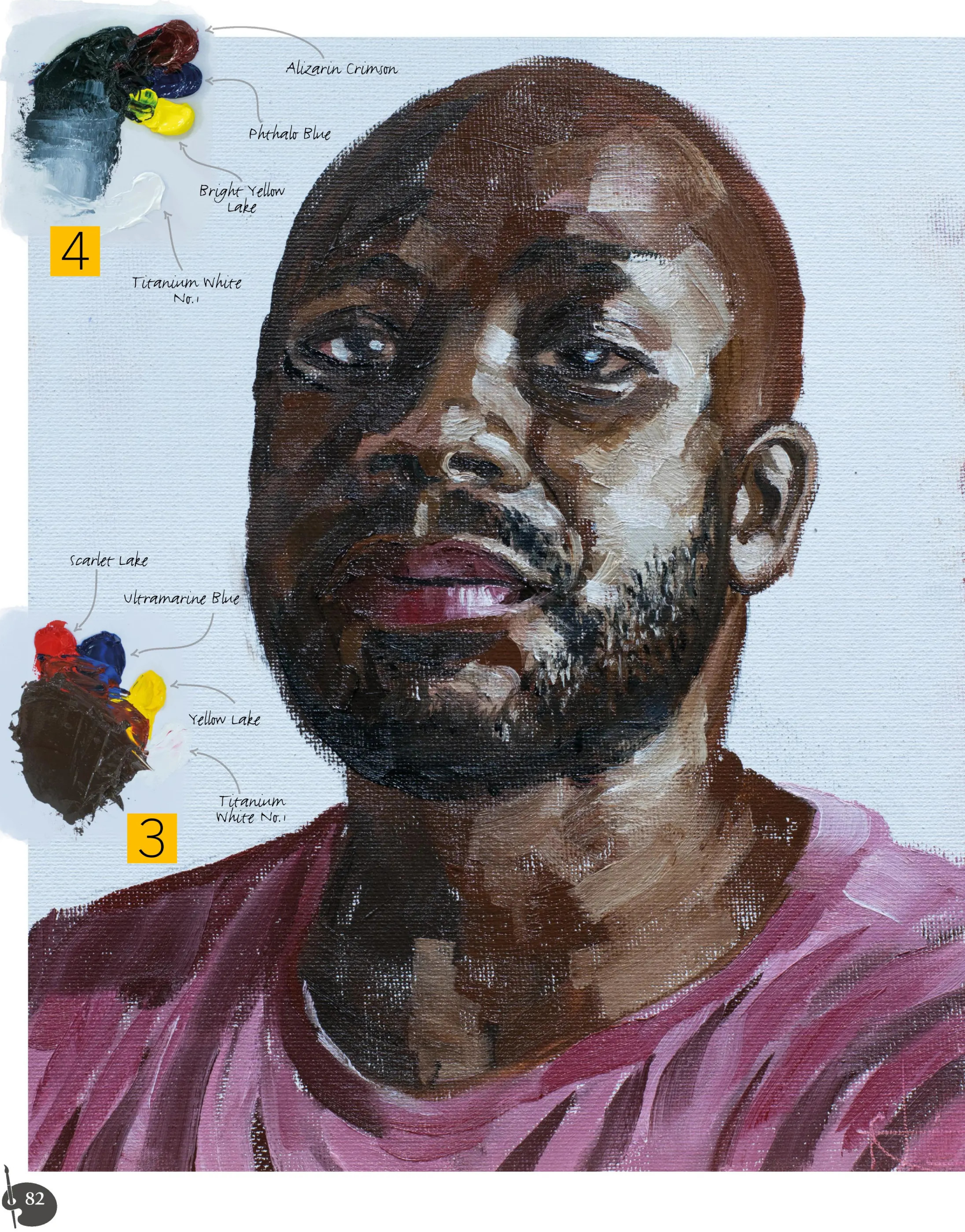
Michael Harding series 2

Scarlet Lake is a lovely strong and warm red belonging to the family of Napthol Red pigments, and is what I use in place of Cadmium Red on my palette. It is an organic red that has very high tinting power and can easily overpower a mix if added in too great a quantity, so go carefully. Scarlet Lake has excellent lightfastness and is also more opaque than some of the other Lake colours, so take that into consideration when glazing or layering colours. It works great as a complementary to greens, reducing saturation without browning too much if handled carefully.

G Titanium White No.1

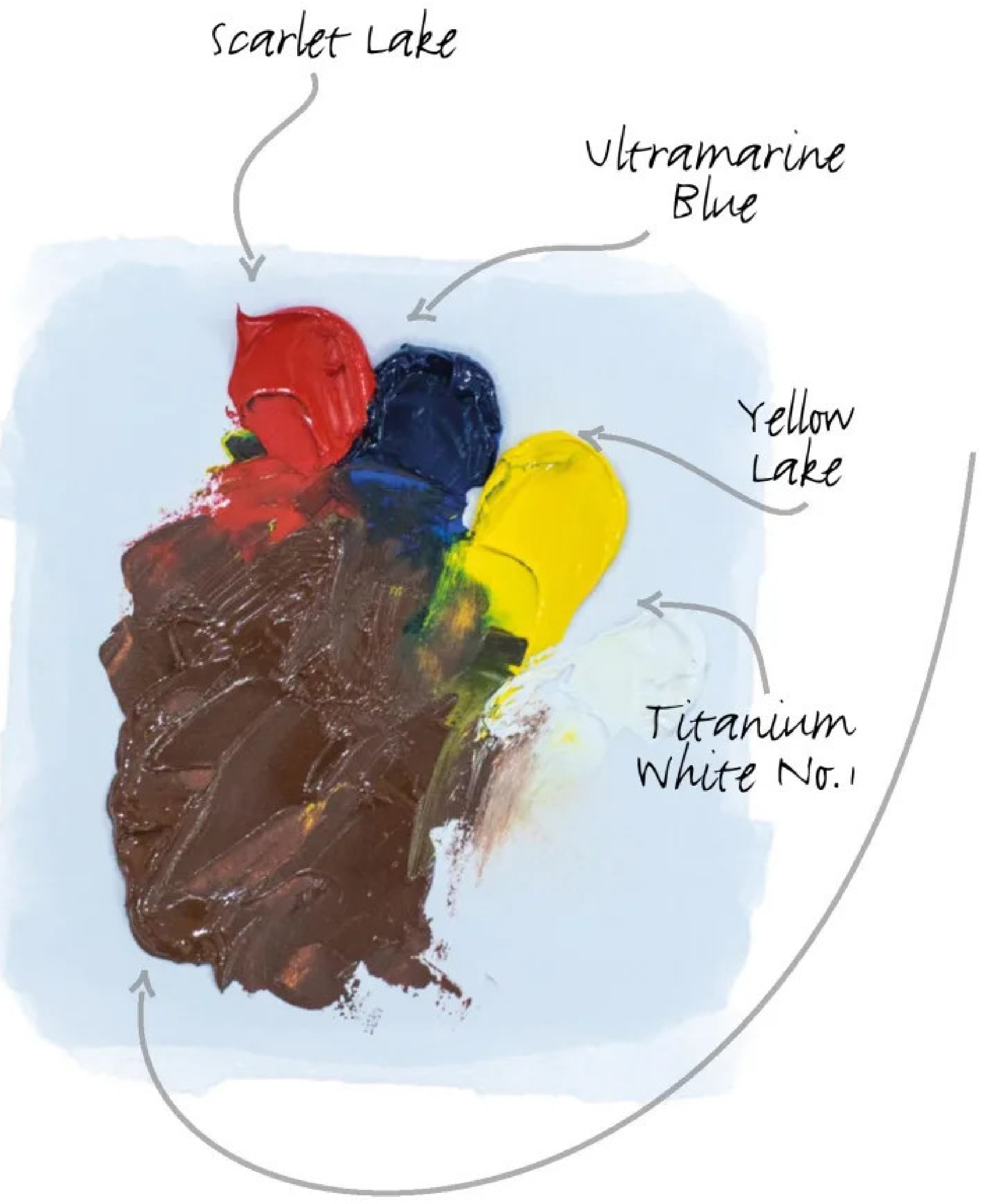
Michael Harding series 3

Titanium White No.1 is lovely and buttery in consistency and the most brilliant white in the Michael Harding range. Ground with safflower oil, which extends its drying time, this Titanium White contains a small addition of Zinc White, which stops the tendency of Titanium White paints weeping oil to the surface whilst drying. That's the attention to detail you get from Michael Harding and why it's worth spending a little more on quality oil paints. Titanium No.1's qualities of drying very slowly, excellent lightfastness and super-high opacity make it my top choice of white for my palette.


Alizarin Crimson
Phthalo Blue
Bright Yellow Lake
Titanium White No.1
4
Scarlet Lake
Ultramarine Blue
Yellow Lake
Titanium White No.1
3

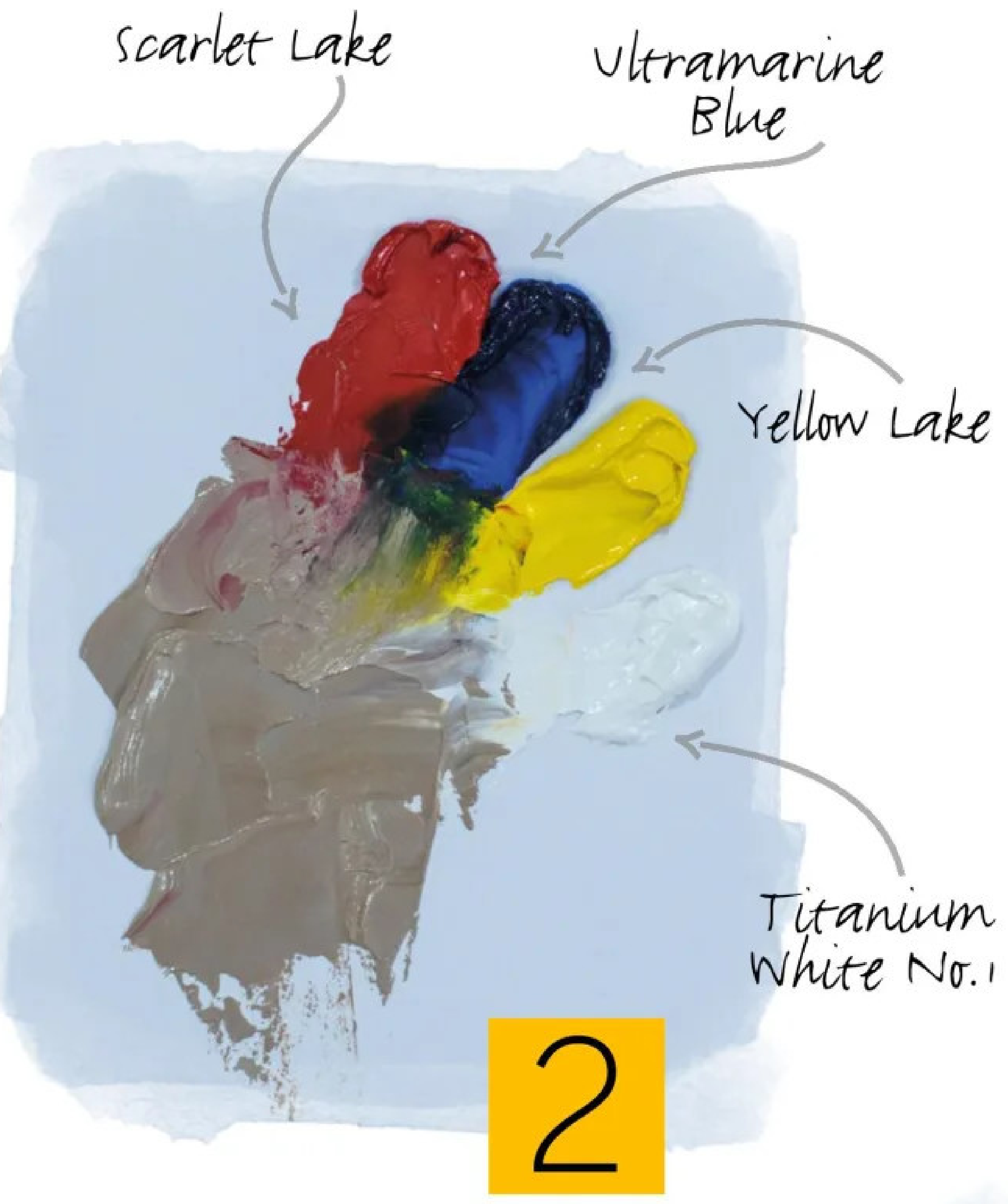
Darker skin tones

Learn how to approach mixing darker skin tones using a limited palette. Build from an initial local colour and push out extremes of light and dark, plus details



1 Mid-tone skin

All skin tones range from base colours of oranges through to browns. You first need to find the local colour of your subject – this is the midpoint of their skin tone. You can then push that midpoint to its lightest and its darkest points. Dependent on lighting, if you mix three unrelated colours to represent these shifts in tone, they will not sit realistically. Here I've mixed a brown with a fairly even balance of Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue to create a violet, added heavy Yellow Lake to desaturate the violet, and a touch of Titanium White No.1 to cool it down a little.



2

2 Light skin tone

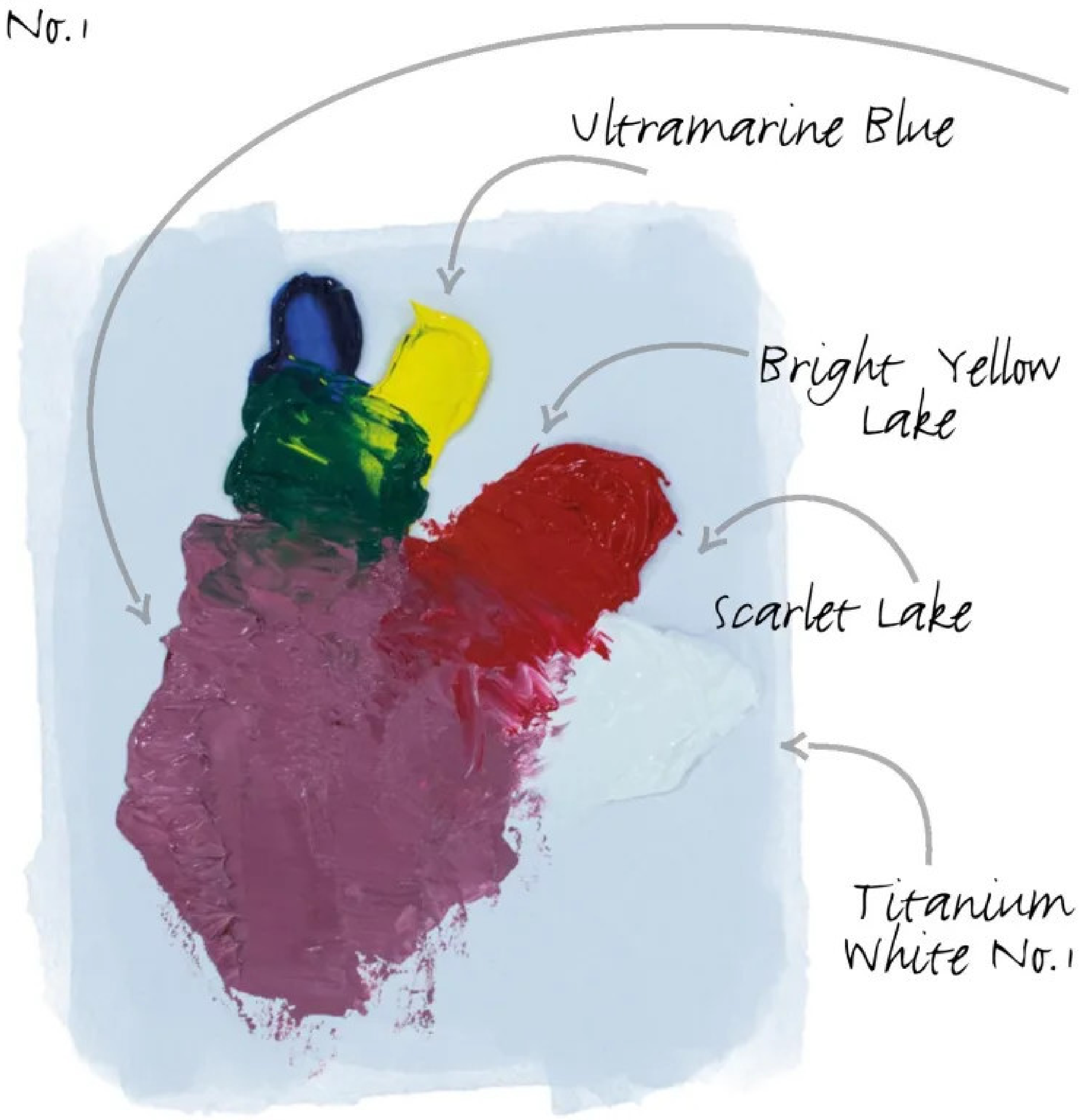
In this mix I want to push my midpoint mix towards the lightest skin tones. Take the same mix of Ultramarine Blue, Scarlet Lake, Yellow Lake and Titanium White No.1, but add increasing amounts of Yellow Lake and Titanium White No.1. If you find the mix starts to go too yellow, carefully add small amounts of Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue to bring it back in line. The Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue combine to create a warm violet that you are then desaturating (or greying down) with your warm Yellow Lake to create a warm brown. Use a tonal scale to test if you've got the correct tone in your mix.

3 Darkest skin tone

Adapt the midpoint again, but this time push it towards the darkest skin tones. Taking the same mix of Ultramarine Blue, Scarlet Lake, Yellow Lake and Titanium White No.1, we're now adding increasing amounts of Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue. If you find the mix going too blue, too red or too violet, simply add more of the counter-balancing colour. Too red? Add more blue. Too blue? Add more red. Too violet? Add more yellow. Once you have these three steps mixed, you can experiment adding additional colours to each to pick out the diverse number of colours found in all skin.

4 Hair

One of the most impressive examples of the 12-step and six-step colour wheel method is mixing your own blacks. Well, if you're a paint geek like me anyway... As with the brown, we're going to mix a violet and then desaturate it with its complementary colour – yellow – but this time we'll be using all the cool versions of our colours. Mix the Alizarin Crimson and Phthalo Blue Lake into an even violet, then start to add Bright Yellow Lake to desaturate the violet into our black. If you go too yellow, simply add more of the Alizarin Crimson and Phthalo Blue Lake. Watch out for the super tinting strength of Phthalo Blue Lake.



5 Lips

Lips are one of those tricky colour mixes to get right. If slightly overdone, they can have the tendency to look painted on. If underdone, a face can look washed-out and ill. Of course, if you're painting the portrait of a woman wearing make-up, this isn't a problem. I wanted a greyed-down pink that would work well for the t-shirt too, so I mixed some Scarlet Lake and Titanium White No.1, then mixed a green from Ultramarine Blue and Bright Yellow Lake as a complementary to desaturate the pink.

Paler skin tones

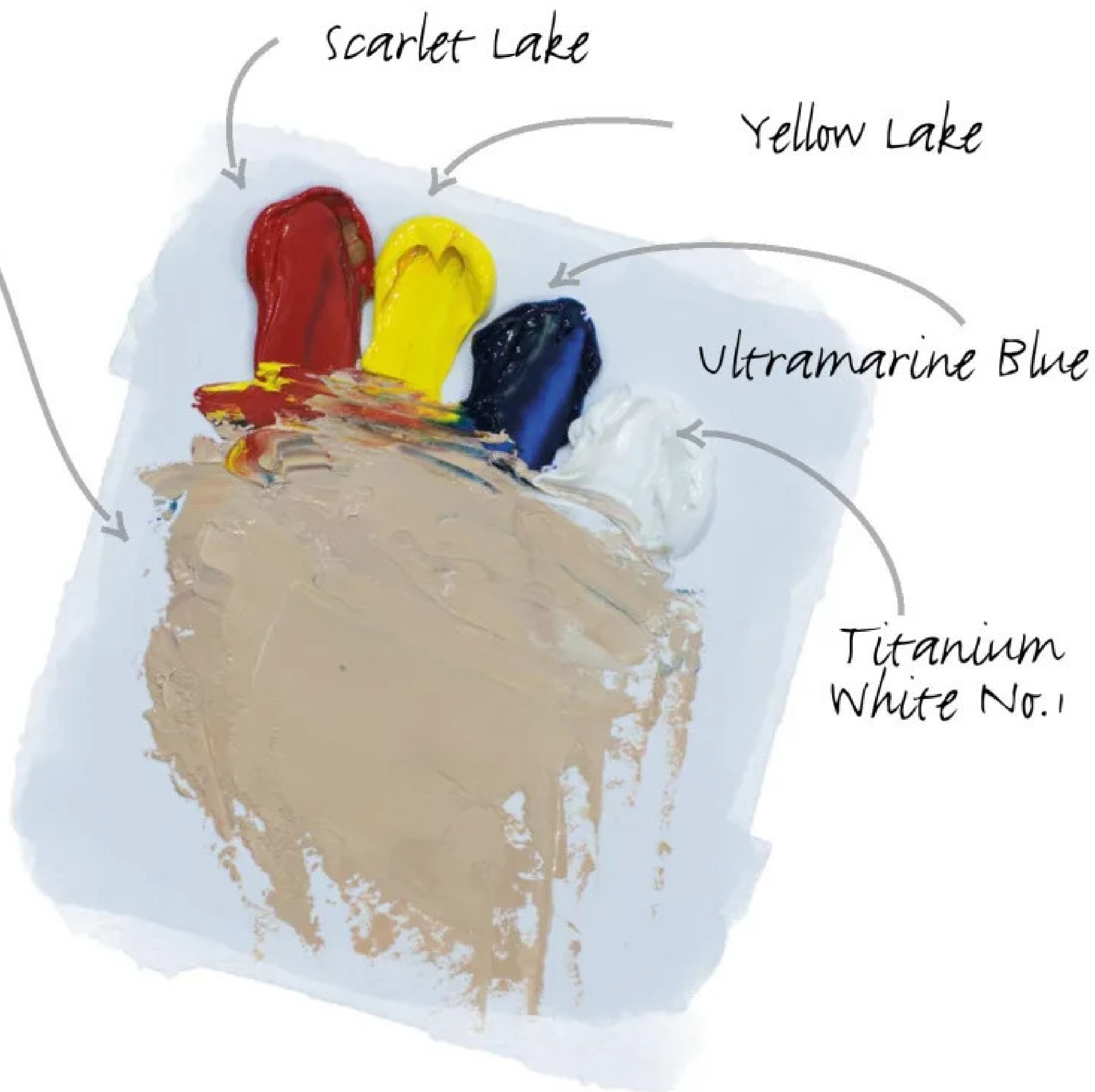
Expand upon the lesson learned in the first portrait by following the same approach on a different skin tone

1 Mid-tone skin

First I need to determine the mid skin tone of my subject. This can be tricky to determine if there's a lot of different lighting in your subject, so you may need to approach strong light sources separately. Try squinting at the subject. This reduces the range of tones you can see and simplifies your subject's tonal range. I mixed Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue to produce my warm violet and then reduced its saturation by adding increasing amounts of Yellow Lake to get my warm light brown. I then cooled and lightened the brown by adding Titanium White No.1.

2 Light skin tone

Try using a tonal scale to accurately judge whether you're reaching the desired tone. You can make these yourself by adding white to one end of a strip of card and black at the other end. Then mix a 50% grey and place halfway in between, and then 25% and 75% greys respectively. You will be shifting tone about as you add increasing levels of details but it really helps to get this initial stage right first. I used the same mix as in step one, but this time I added greater quantities of Yellow Lake and Titanium White No.1 until I reached the desired tone.



3 Darkest skin tone

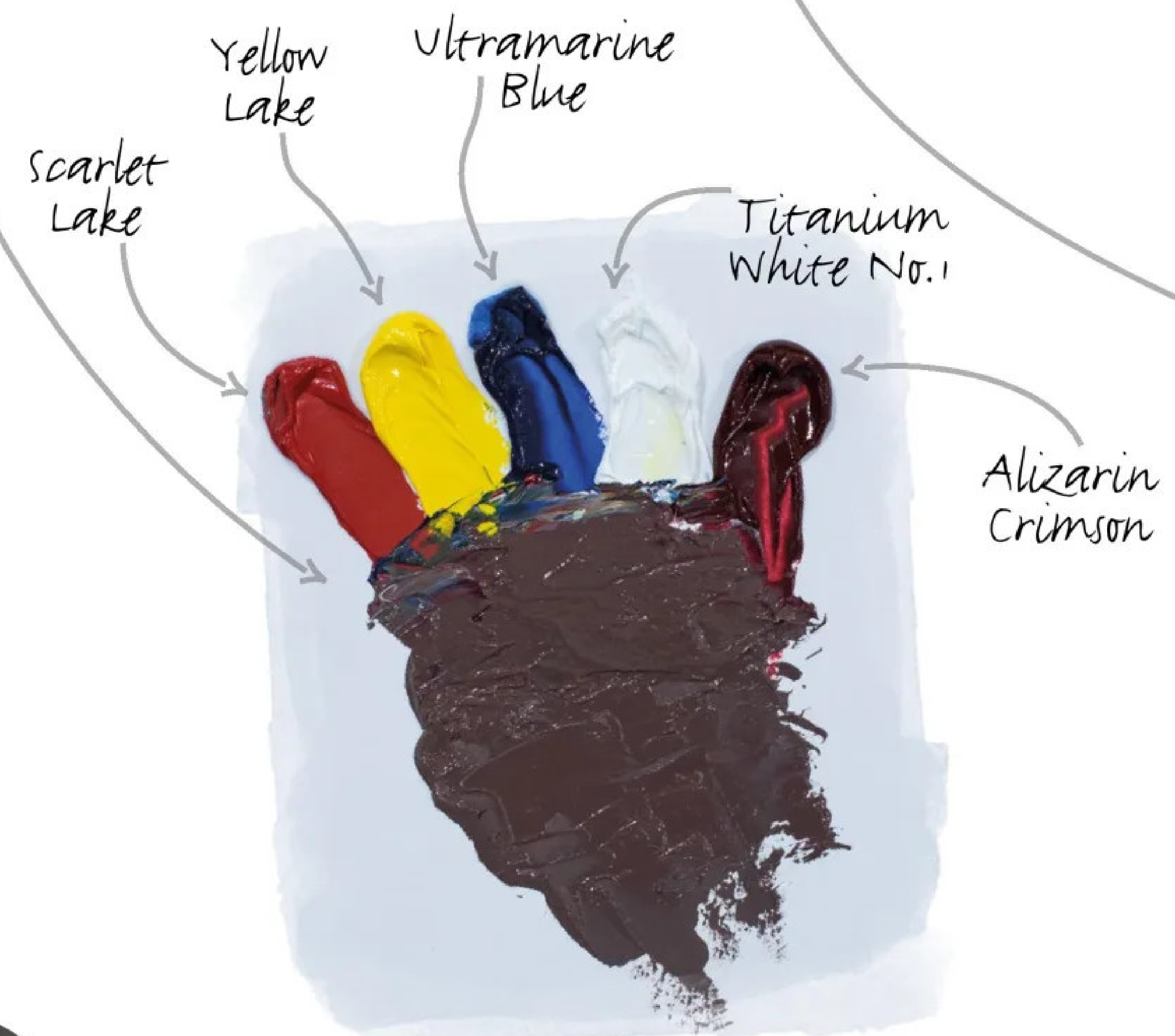
The darker areas of our subject's skin tones have a more violet tendency, so we're going to have to shift our skin tone mix accordingly. I used Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue to make a violet that leant more towards the blues to keep it cooler, then added Yellow Lake to desaturate the violet and some Alizarin Crimson to add even more depth to the mix. I then lightened and cooled it down with a little Titanium White No.1. Try adding increasing amounts of Ultramarine Blue and Alizarin Crimson if the mix isn't quite violet enough.

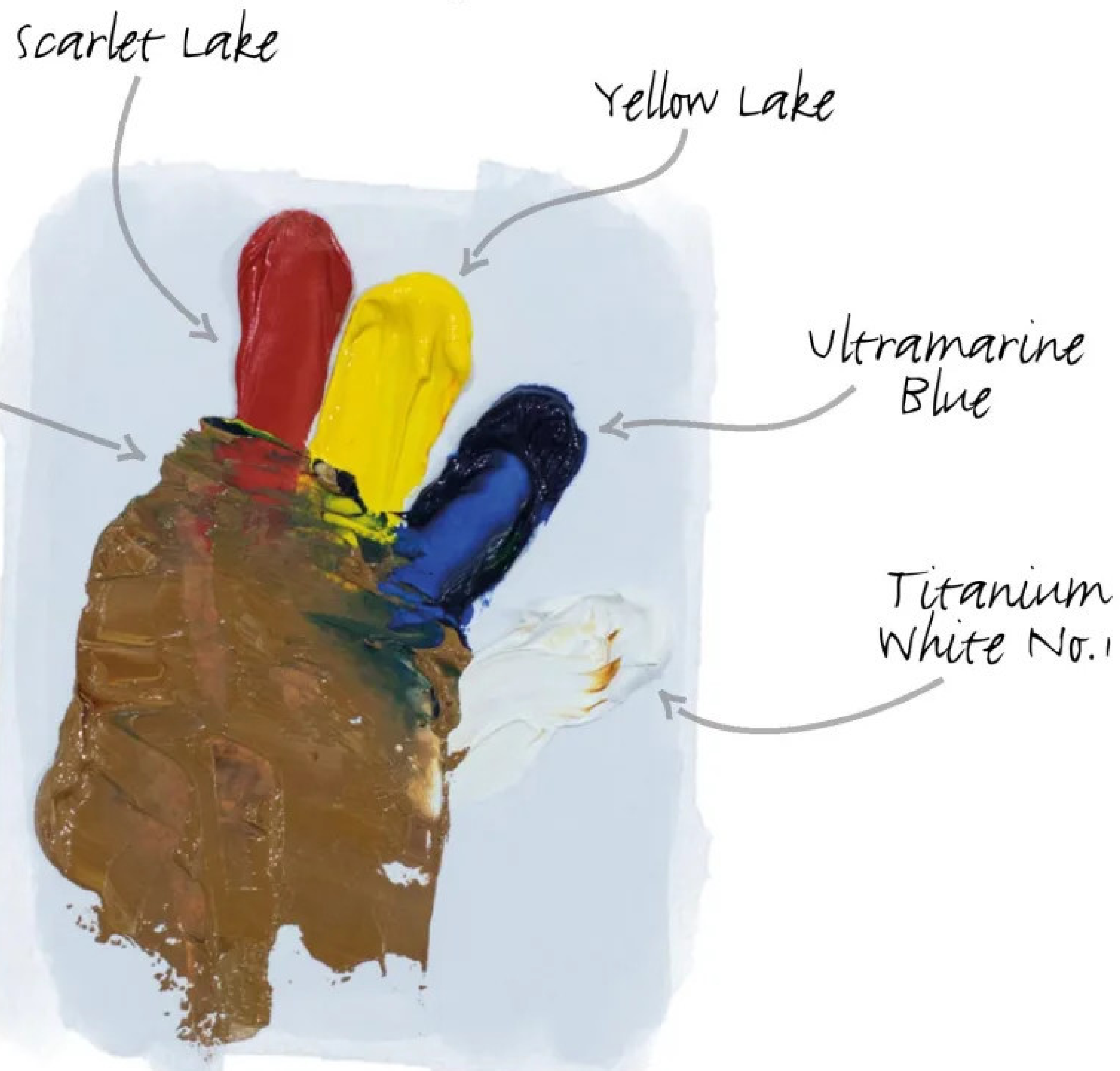
4 Hair

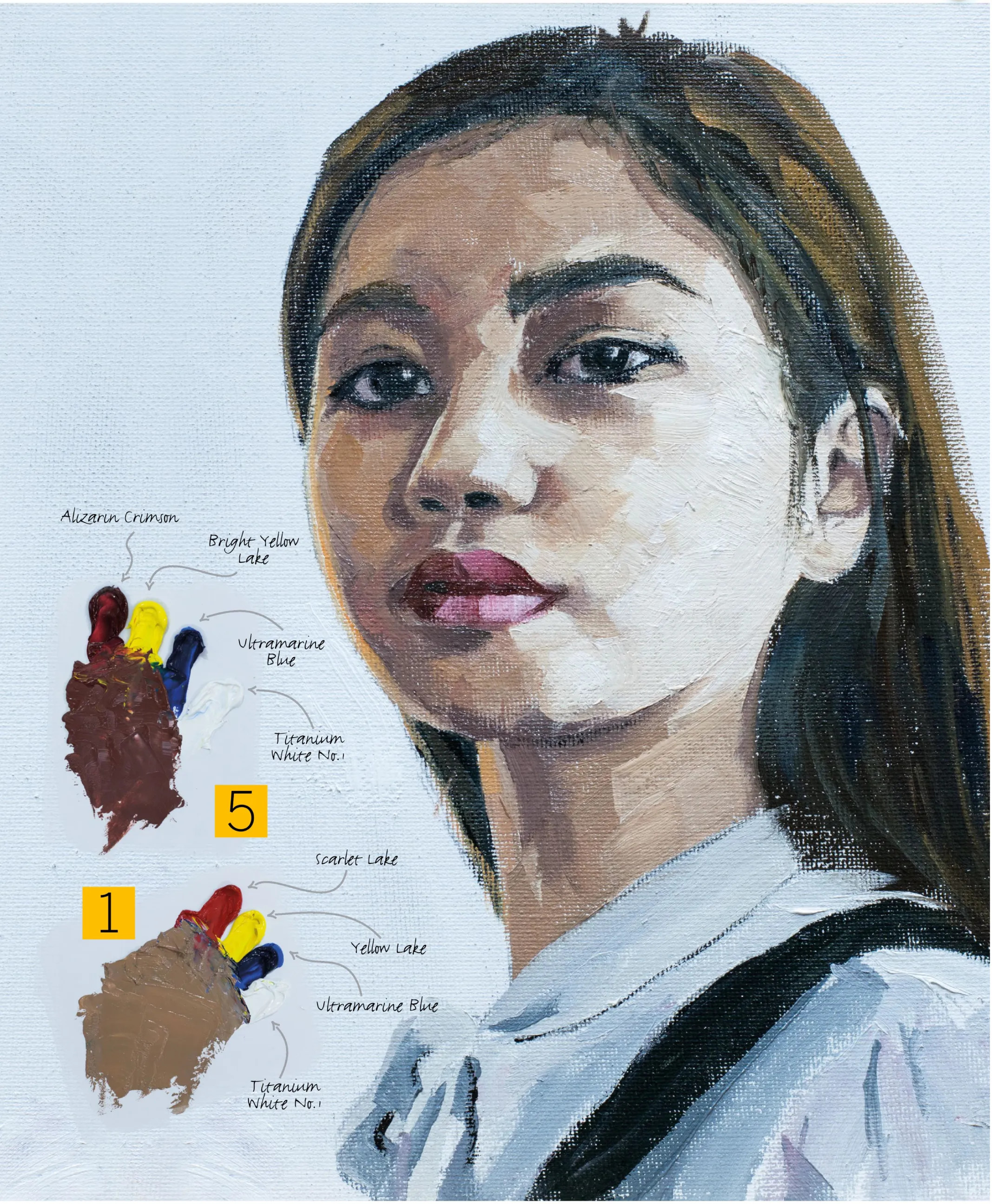
The subject's hair is black in most places, but looks as if highlights are added too. With the lighting these show up as a light warm brown. I mixed Scarlet Lake and Ultramarine Blue to create a warm violet. I then added more Scarlet Lake to this mix to keep the violet warmer, then reduced its saturation and turned the violet into a warm brown by adding Yellow Lake. I then cooled and lightened the mix by carefully adding small amounts of Titanium White No.1 until I reached the desired colour.

5 Lips

In this portrait the subject has a very pronounced lip colour and I really wanted them to 'pop', but without overpowering the composition. In order to achieve this, the lip colour needed to be related to the skin tones, but also have its own sense of place in the painting. I mixed my violet but this time replaced Scarlet Lake with Alizarin Crimson to give the mix a deeper, more ruby red colour. I then added small amounts of Bright Yellow Lake and Titanium White No.1 to subtly reduce the saturation and lighten the colour.






Alizarin Crimson
Bright Yellow Lake
Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White No.1
5
Scarlet Lake
1
Yellow Lake
Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White No.1

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Emotive portraits in watercolour

Find out how to paint expressive portraits with **Stephie Butler**, using shape and colour to convey emotion

Materials

- ☐ 1/2 sheet Arches 140lb paper, NOT (CP)
- ☐ Winsor & Newton colourless masking fluid
- ☐ Mixing palette
- ☐ Winsor & Newton Artist quality paints; Aureolin / Permanent Rose / Cerulean Blue / Cobalt Blue / French Ultramarine / Cadmium Red
- ☐ Brush; Large Mop / Sable Round Size 14 / Pointed Round Size 8 / Rigger Size 3 / Large & small flat

About **STEPHIE**

London, UK

Stephie is an award-winning watercolour artist with a passion for portraits and wildlife. She is a member of the Society of Women Artists, exhibiting at the Mall Galleries, London. Her work is in private collections across world.

www.stephiebutler.com

In this guide you will learn how to paint portraits in watercolour – full of colour, with an impressionistic feel that really makes your work stand out. The focus of this tutorial is the face, showing you how to portray feelings and emotions in your subject. Pay particular attention to the eyes, because they capture emotion, holding the story behind them.

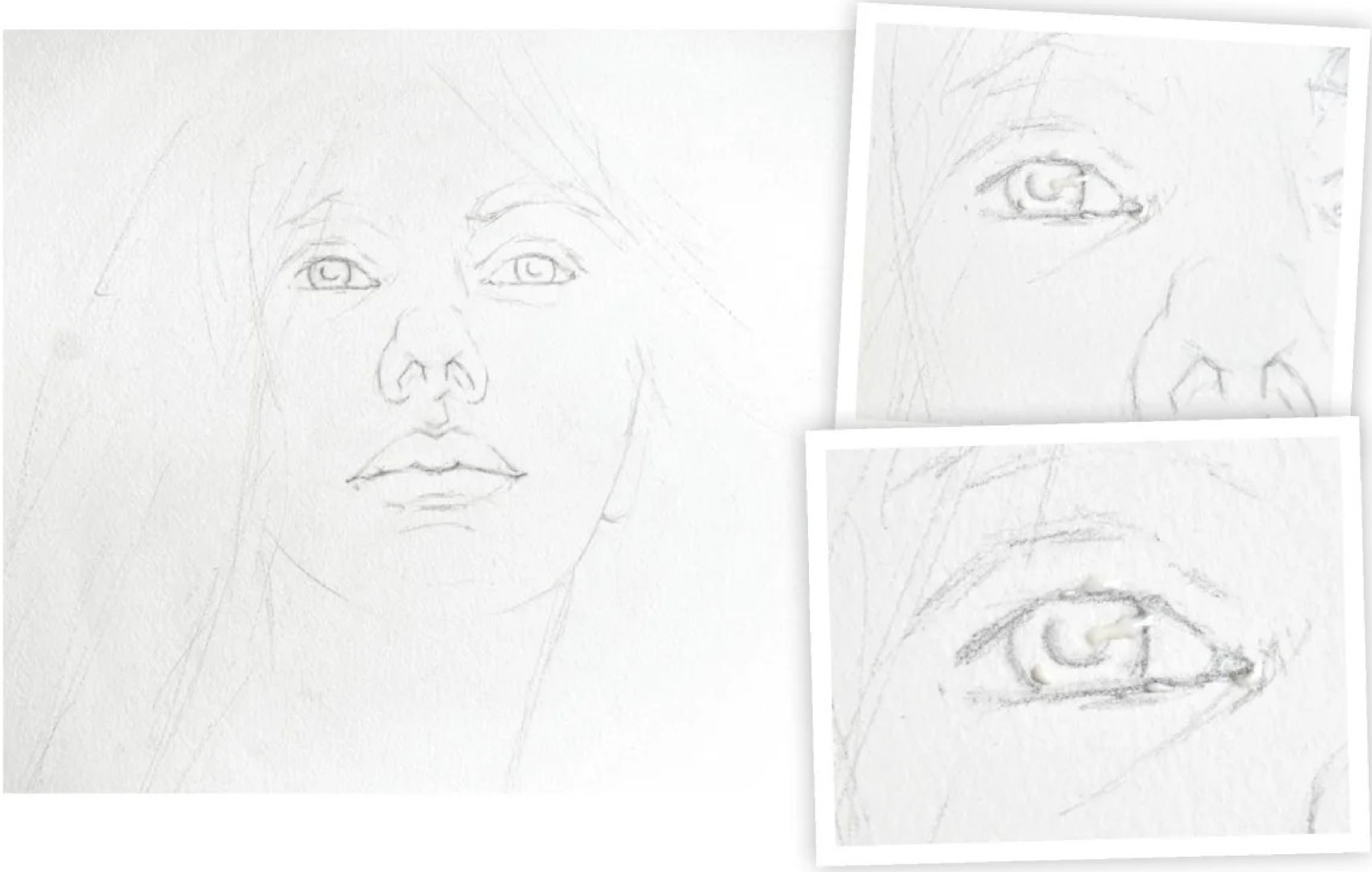
Practising this technique will teach you how to paint instinctively. You can become comfortable painting with expressive colours that enhance the subject. Learn how to use your reference photo as a guide, rather than copying it slavishly. After this tutorial you may even go on to paint from black-and-white reference photos, allowing you to be braver and more confident with exploring colour.

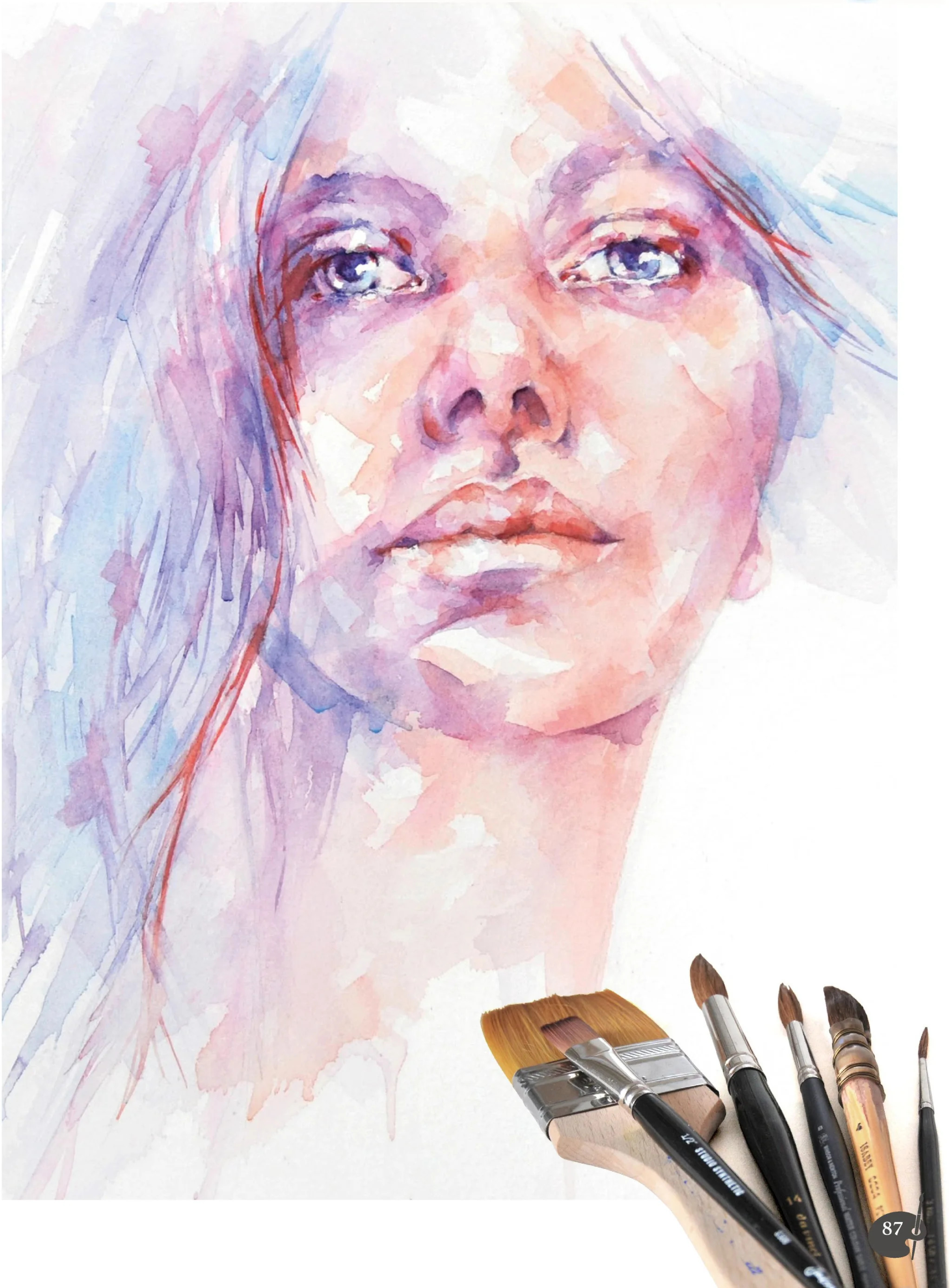
Once you have mastered these skills you will be able to bring life to your portrait using shapes of colour to bring form. I'll show you that painting bigger portraits using bigger brushes, creates the freedom to paint without being confined. One of the most important factors in painting a portrait that shows an emotion is in choosing the right reference photo. Step one: learn the techniques. Step two: find a photo that engages you and makes you want to reach for your paints. Step three: Practise what you have learnt in this tutorial.

Mastering these techniques will enable you to go on to paint portraits of people who interest you, inspire you and engage you.

1 Saving the light

Draw the face, leaving plenty of space around it to allow for freedom of movement when painting, along with the added choice to crop when finished. Only add minimal suggestion lines for the direction of the hair. It's important to save the highlights in the eyes using masking fluid. This will enhance the focal point, engaging the viewer and telling the story. The main highlight should start just inside the pupil, carrying through the iris to the eyeball. Be sure that this is dry before adding any water or paint.



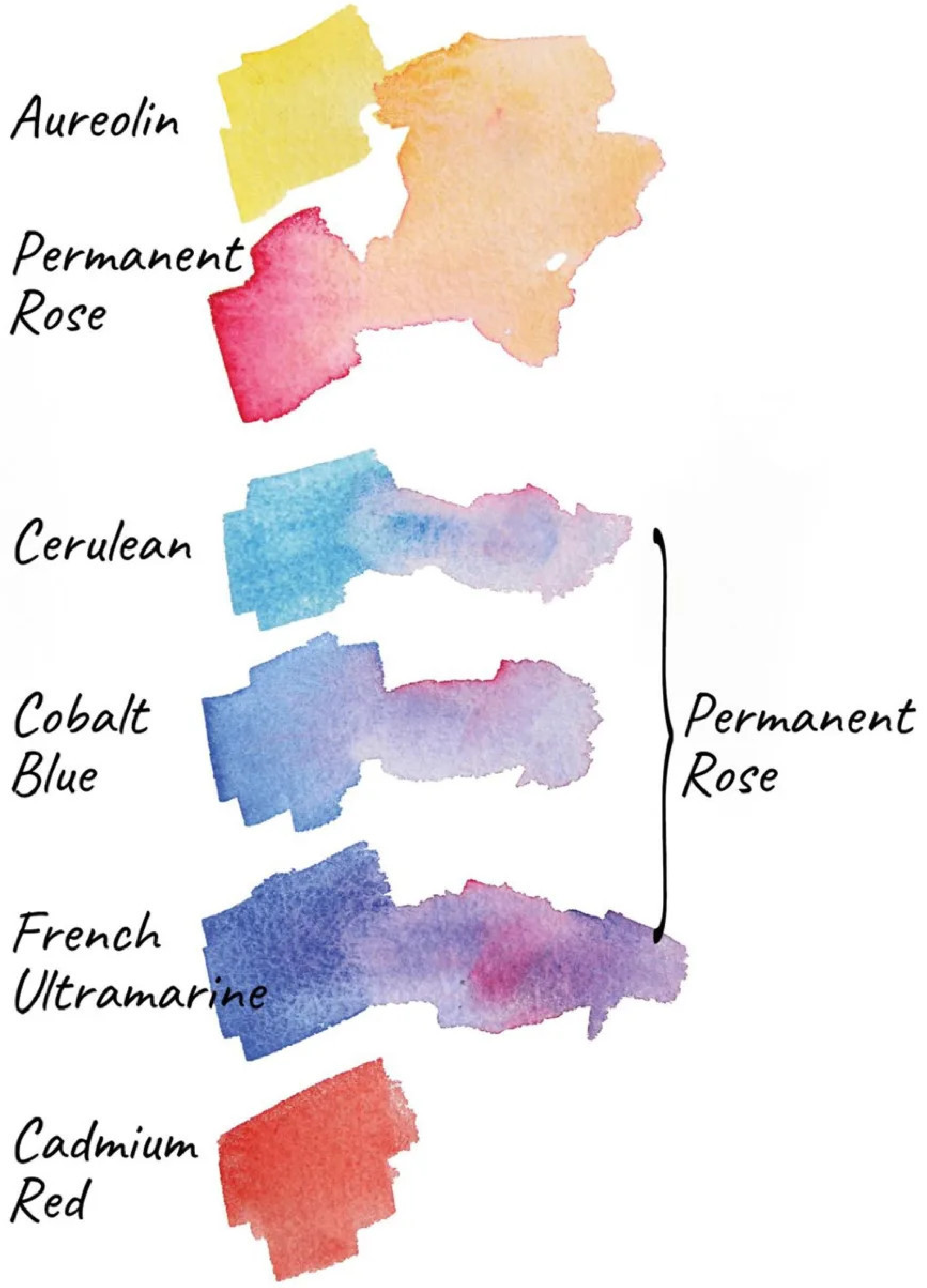


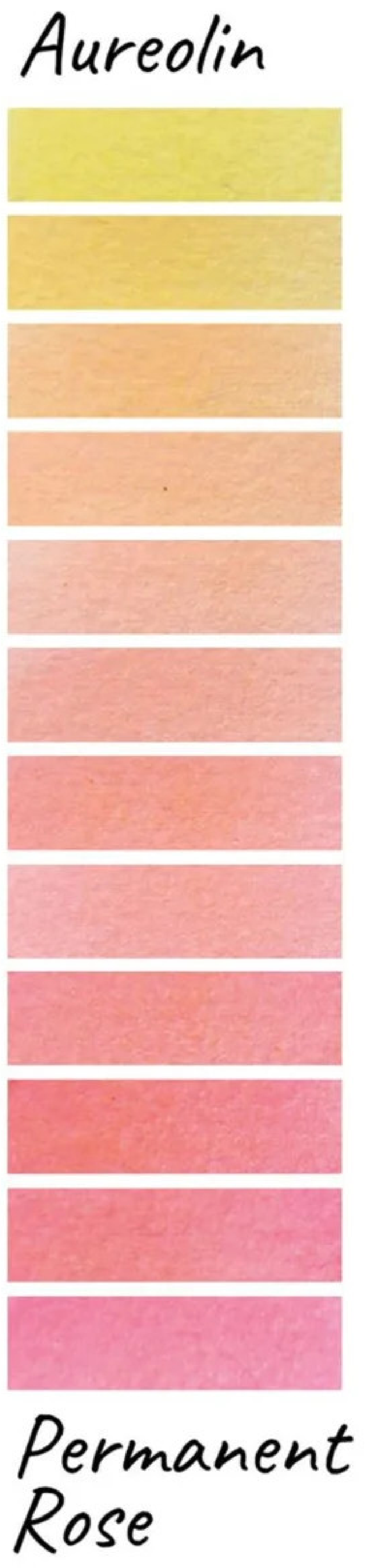
2 Basic colour mix

At one end of the palette put out mixes of Aureolin and Permanent Rose. This will form your flesh tones, keeping these at one end of the palette away from the blues. At the other end mix some Cerulean, Cobalt plus another mix of Permanent Rose. Using a wet brush gently bring the colours together making sure you also leave some colour pure. To keep your colours bright and transparent, never introduce a third colour when wet – this would form a neutral grey. Keep two pots of water, one for the reds and one for the blues.

3 Limit your palette

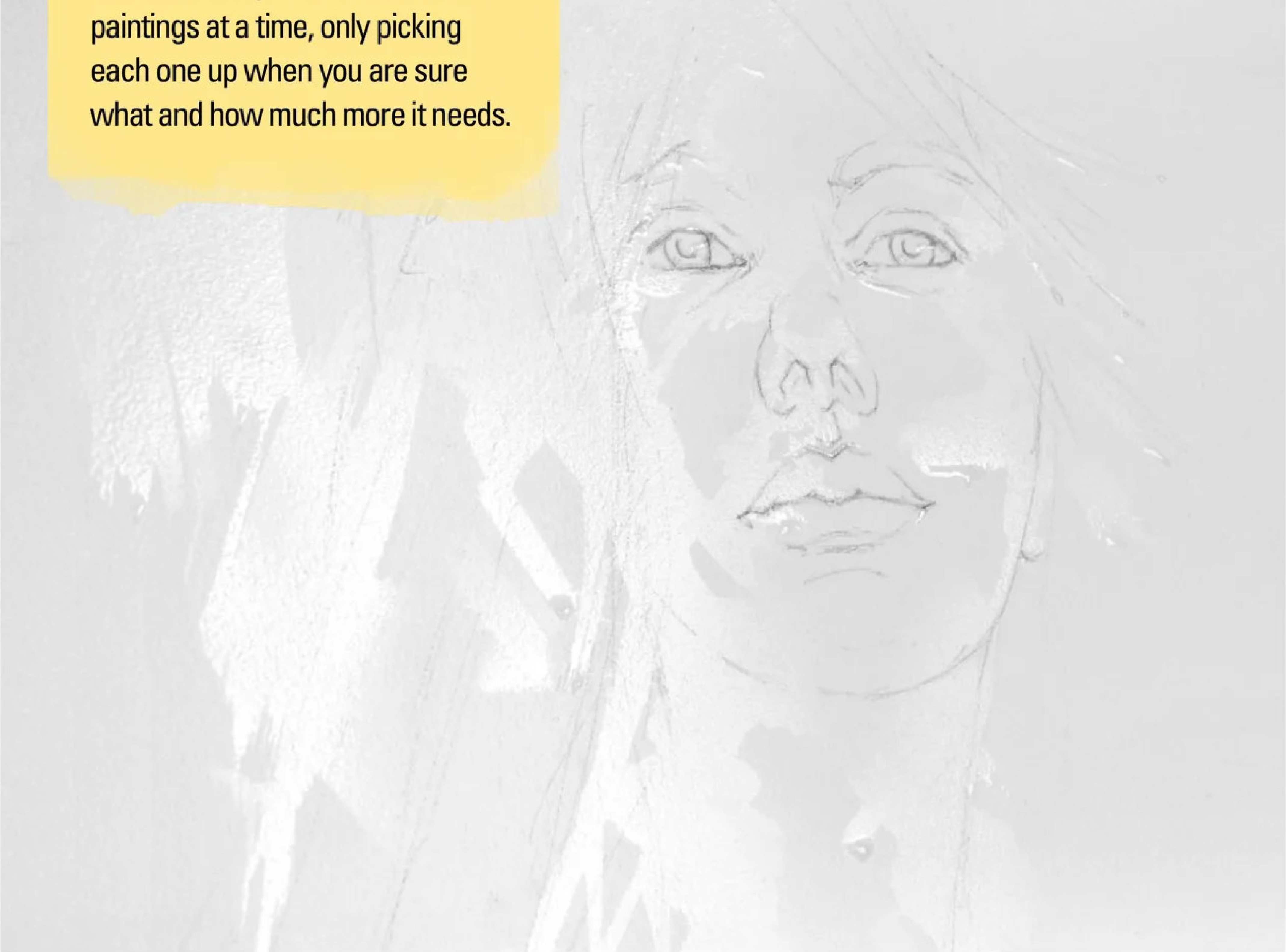
Limit your palette of colours and learn how to mix them. Try it and see how many shades you can make from just two colours. Working this way will also help the colours unite with each other in your subject and keep a freshness to your work.





Step back often

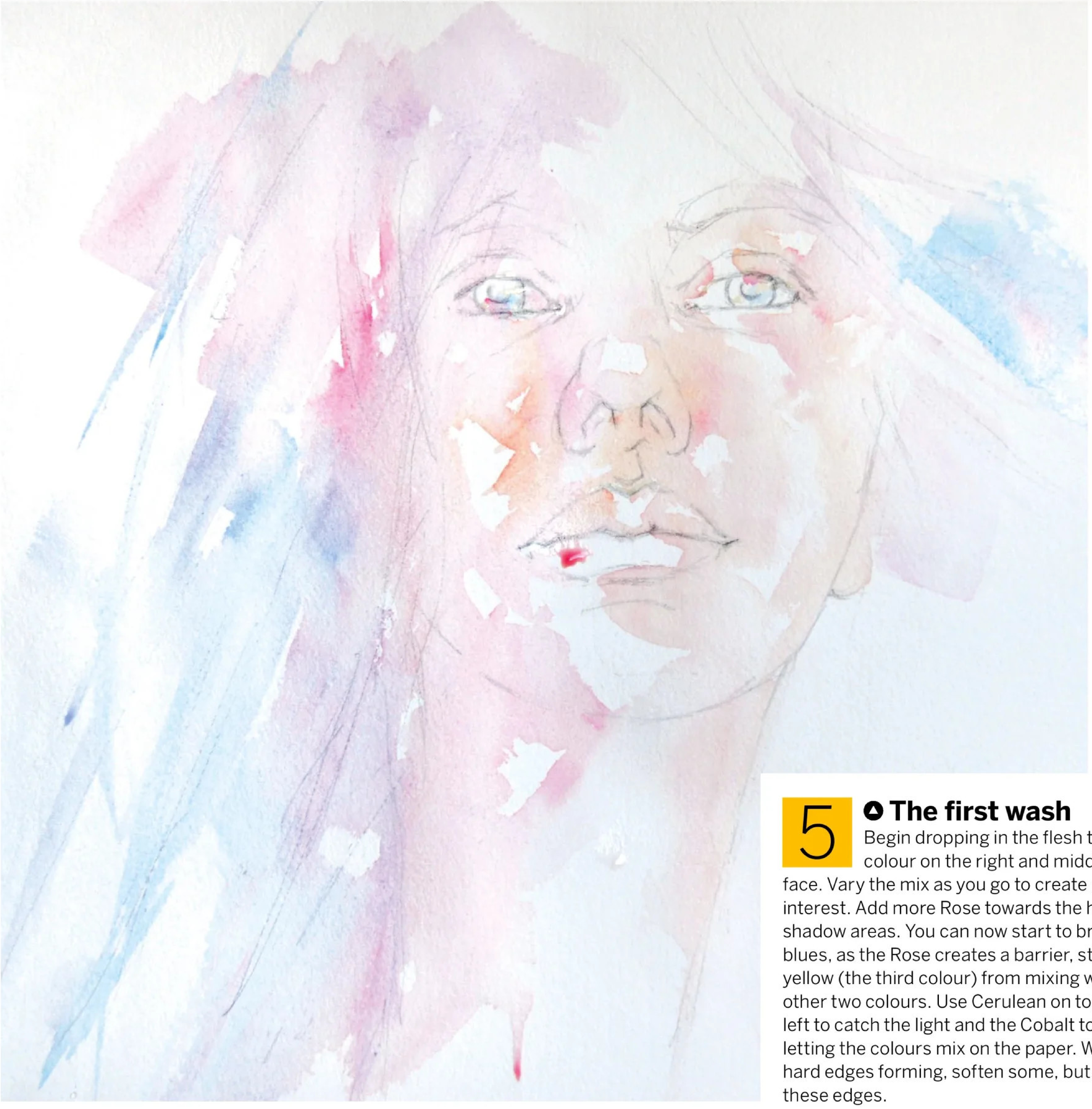
Take time to stand back and look at your work. Standing back allows you to see it all working together. This will also help you know when it's time to stop. Work on a few paintings at a time, only picking each one up when you are sure what and how much more it needs.



4 Paint it with water

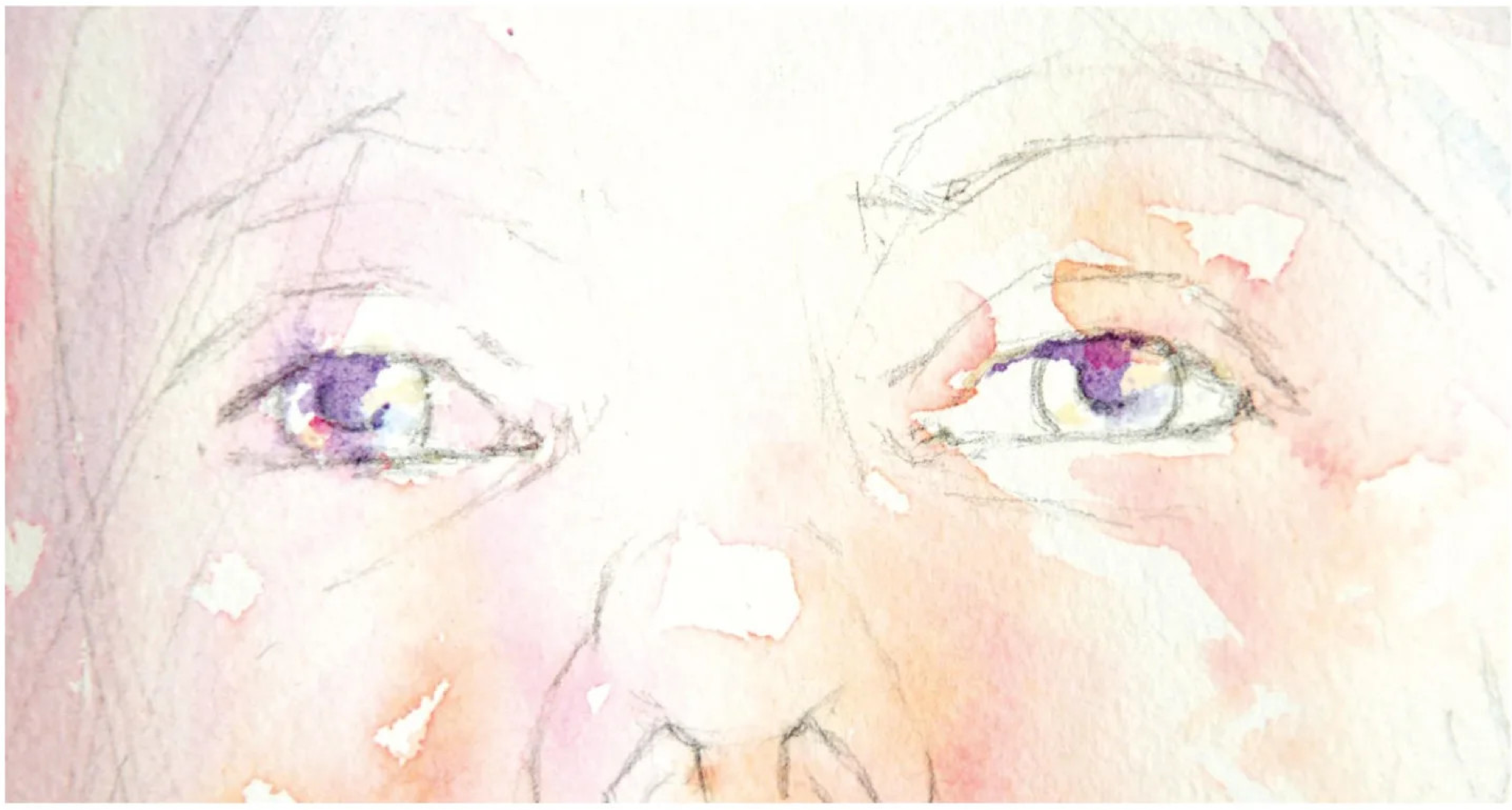
Use a squirrel mop for this stage as it holds lots of water and allows you to use the point when needed. Treat this part as though you were sketching. Run the wet brush around concentrating mostly in the mid and dark-tone areas. Make sure you connect all the features as you go. Keep your subject and background as one and carry this on throughout. Move your brush more freely and abstractly from the face to the hair. This is a foundation for you to build on so resist the urge to paint with detail.

> "Keep your subject and background as one and carry this on throughout"



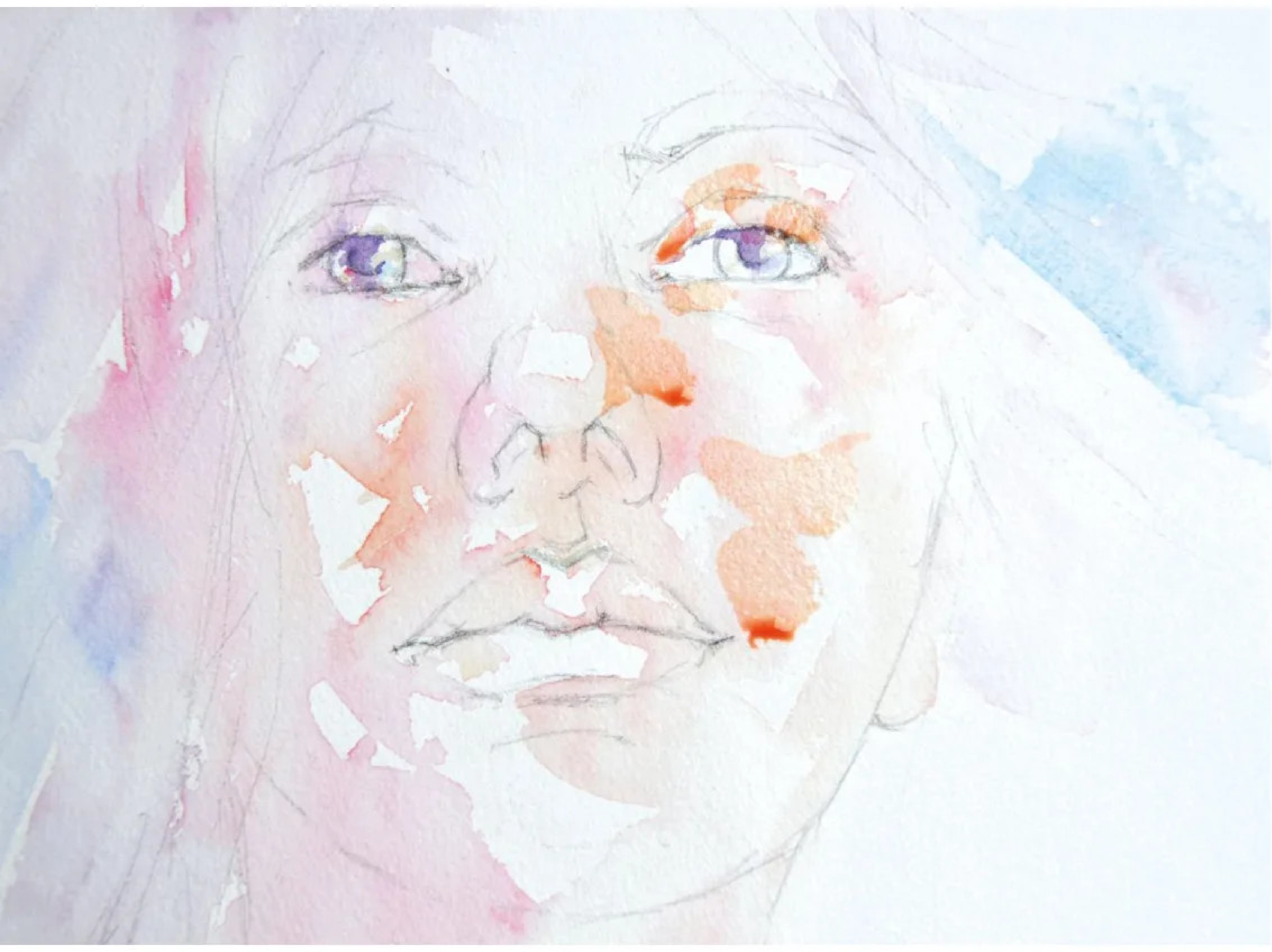
5 ▲ The first wash

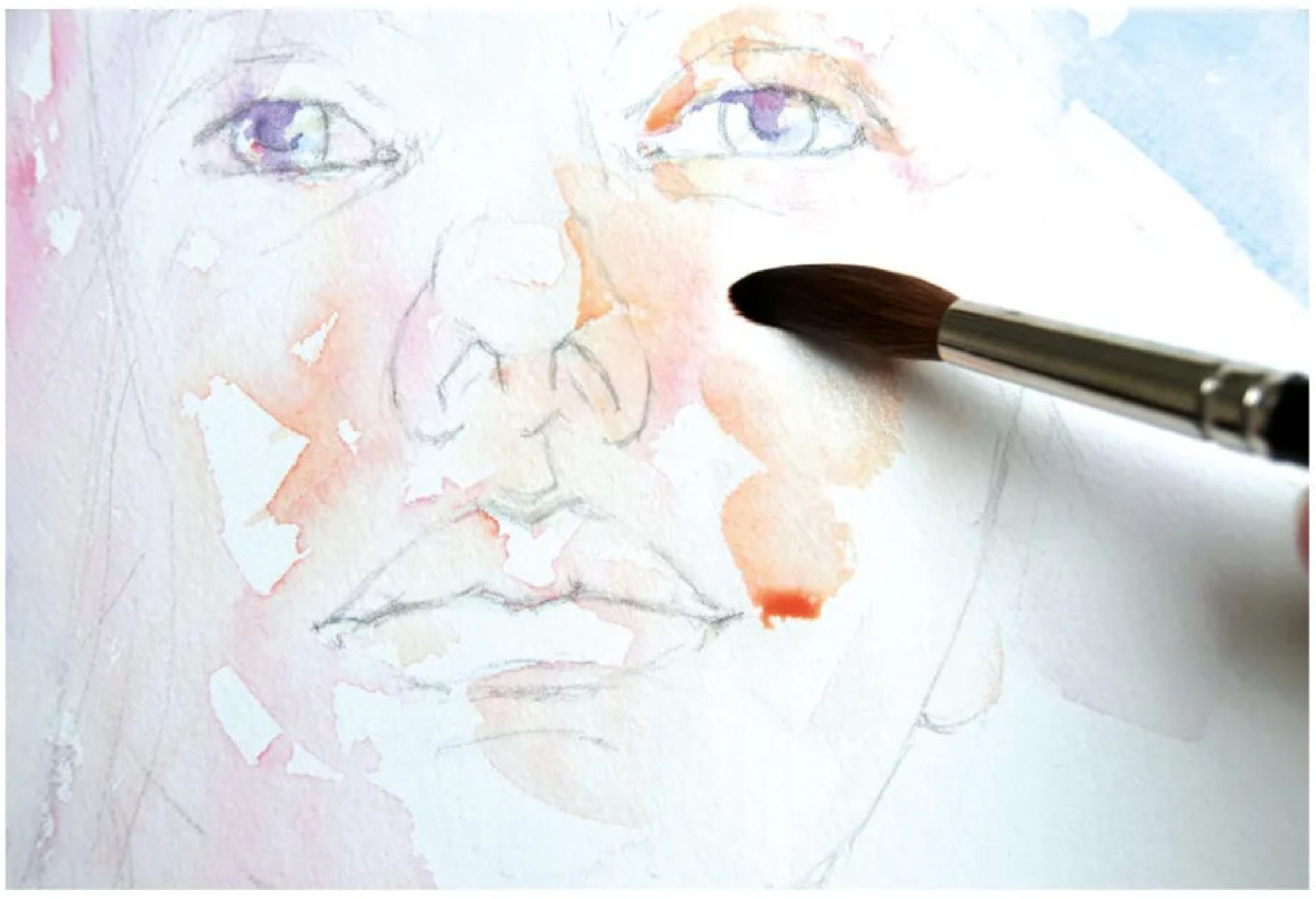
Begin dropping in the flesh tone colour on the right and middle of the face. Vary the mix as you go to create more interest. Add more Rose towards the hair and shadow areas. You can now start to bring in the blues, as the Rose creates a barrier, stopping the yellow (the third colour) from mixing with the other two colours. Use Cerulean on top of the hair left to catch the light and the Cobalt to the right, letting the colours mix on the paper. Watch for hard edges forming, soften some, but not all of these edges.

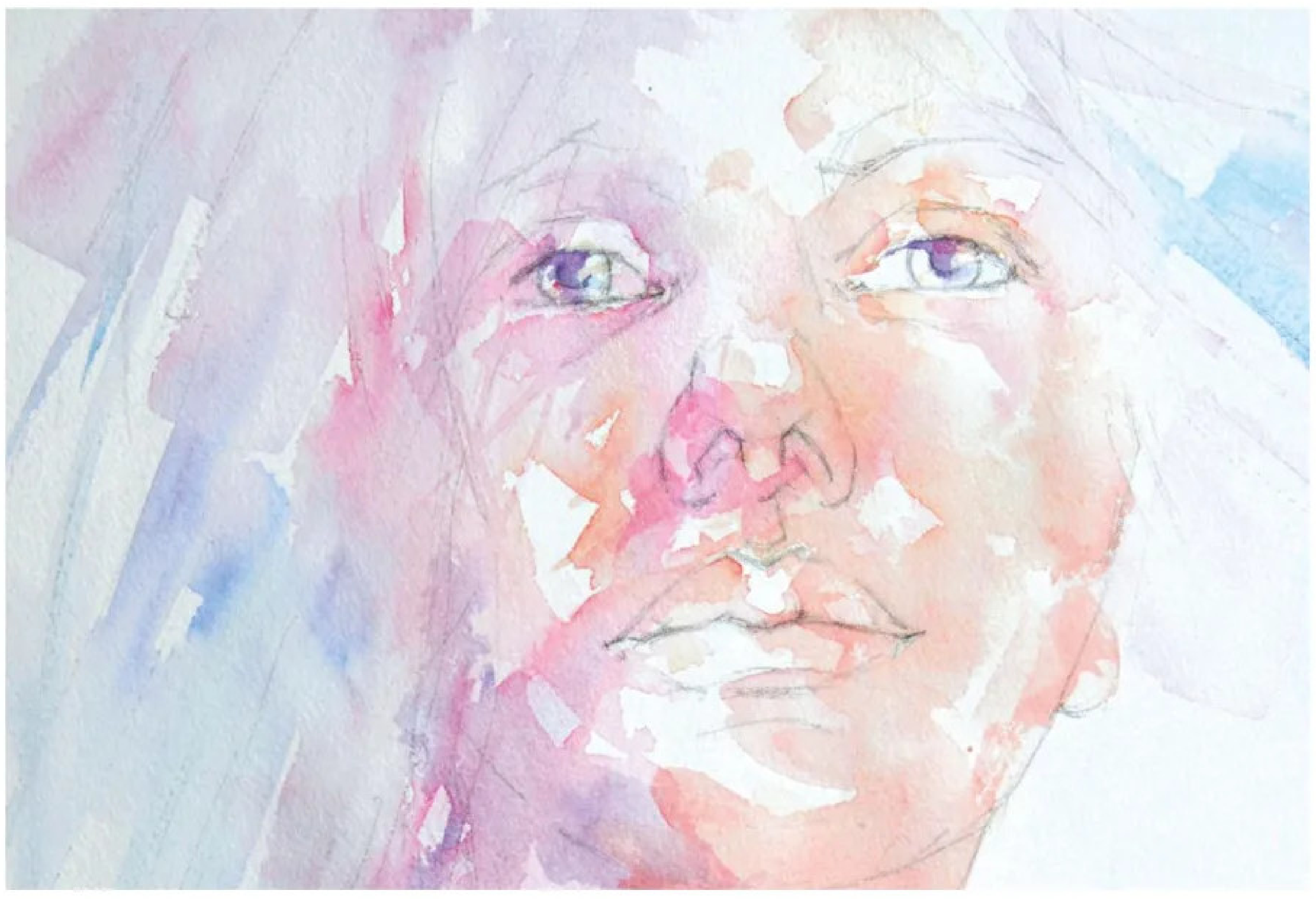


6 ◄ Windows to the soul

The eyes are the soul of the subject and are the focal point of your portrait. They will be painted using many layers, using slightly different mixes each time. With a mix of Ultramarine and Rose and a pointed round, start by adding some darks to the pupil. Soften this and anchor it to the top lid. Placing some darks at this stage will help you see where to change your tones around the rest of the painting.

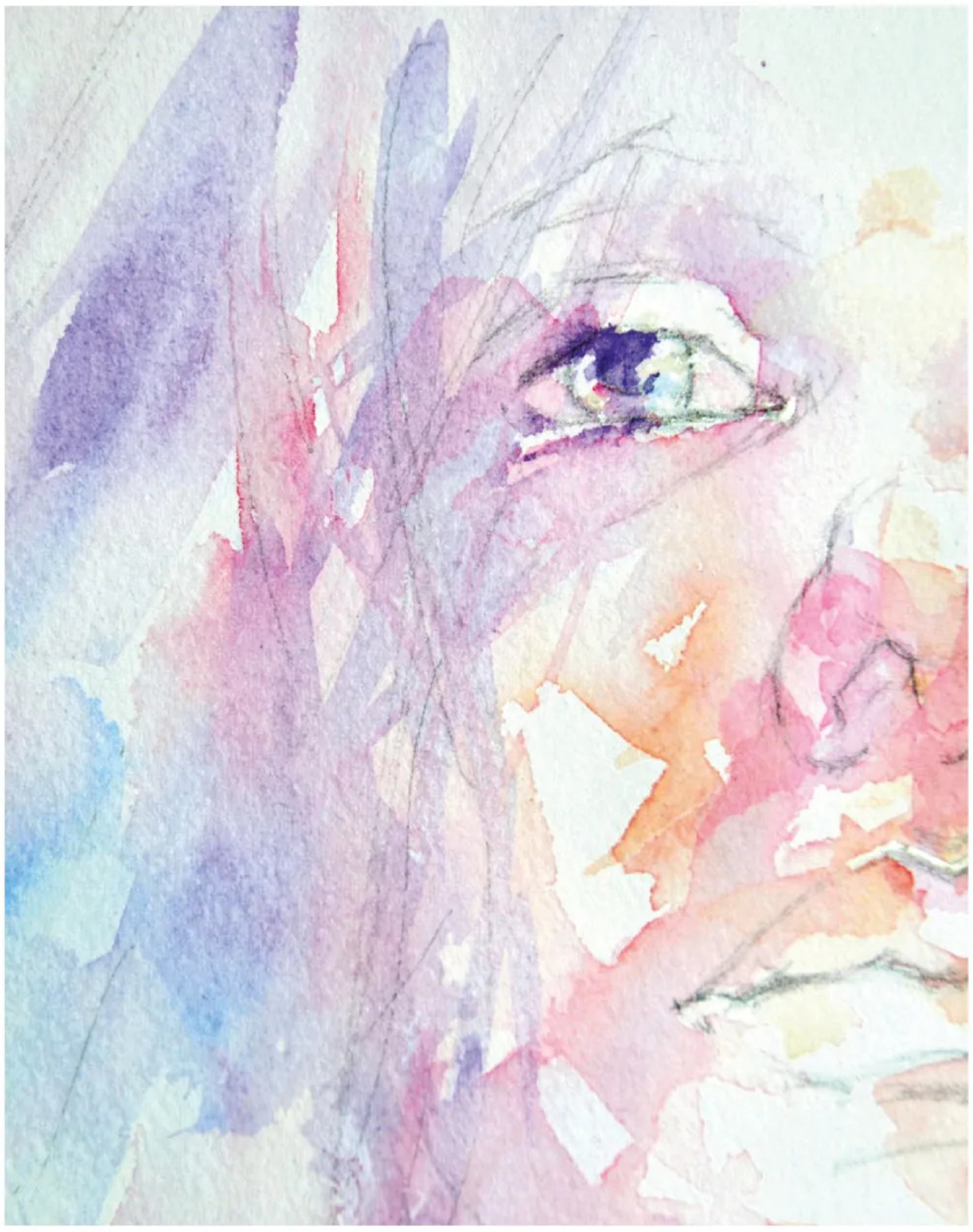






7 Shapes of colour

The painting is built with shape and colour. Keep changing the shapes, size and colour. After the first wash is dry, start by placing more flesh tones. With a large round wet brush, move between the colours touching the edges, allowing them to soften and pick up some pigment. It is important that when you soften an edge, you carry the remaining pigment into another shape. Do this across the face and hair changing colour as you go.

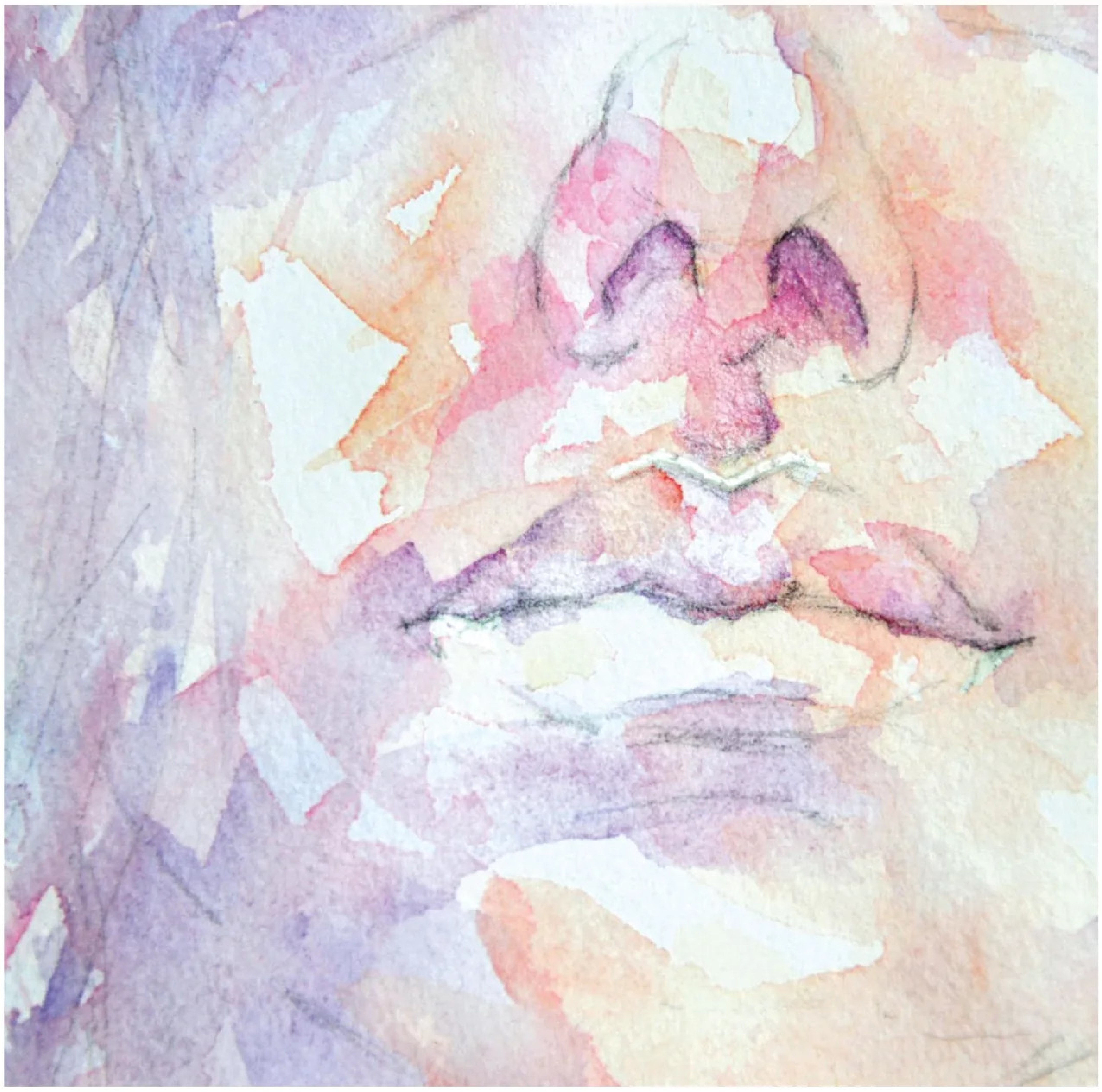


8 Building the shapes

Go back to the pupil each time you add more layers, pushing your tone deeper and keeping you engaged with your subject. Strengthen the pupil with a blue mix, then soften out to the side of the eye and down into the hair. As you go into the hair think about the shapes you are forming, using your reference photo continuously as a guide, but don't try to copy it exactly. Use abstract shapes to create some dynamic areas of shadow and light in the hair.

Make time to practise

Practising techniques enables you to play and experiment. Becoming familiar with picking the right colour, a brush and how to control it, how much water to add, all leaves you more relaxed with a sense of freedom. Allowing you time to engage more with your subject, focussing on the emotions, concentrating on your interpretation of it.

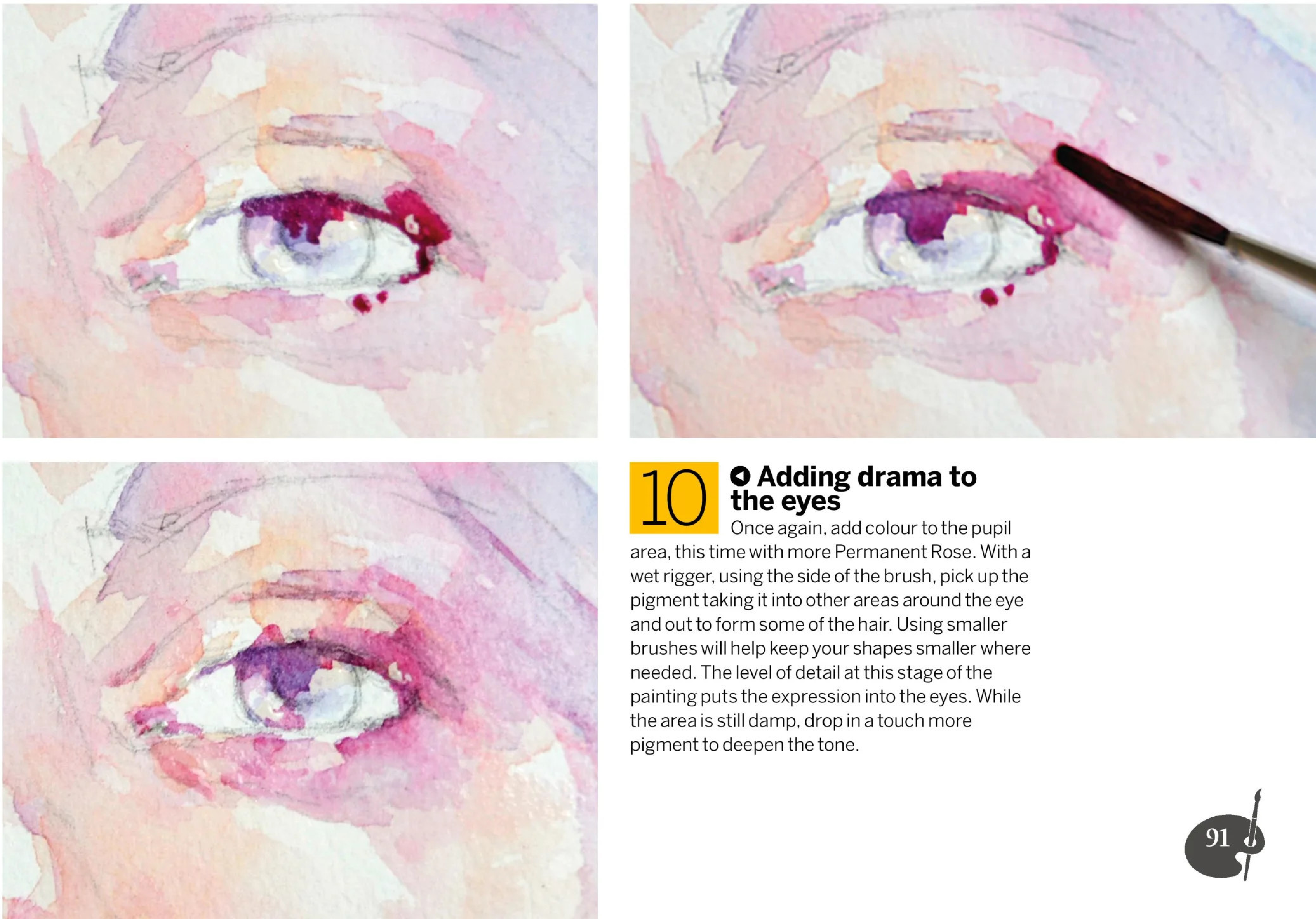


Know your subject

Take time to learn about your subject, doing sketches of features and the placement of them. Learning the planes of these will benefit your painting greatly, as you will know instinctively where to add tone and colour.

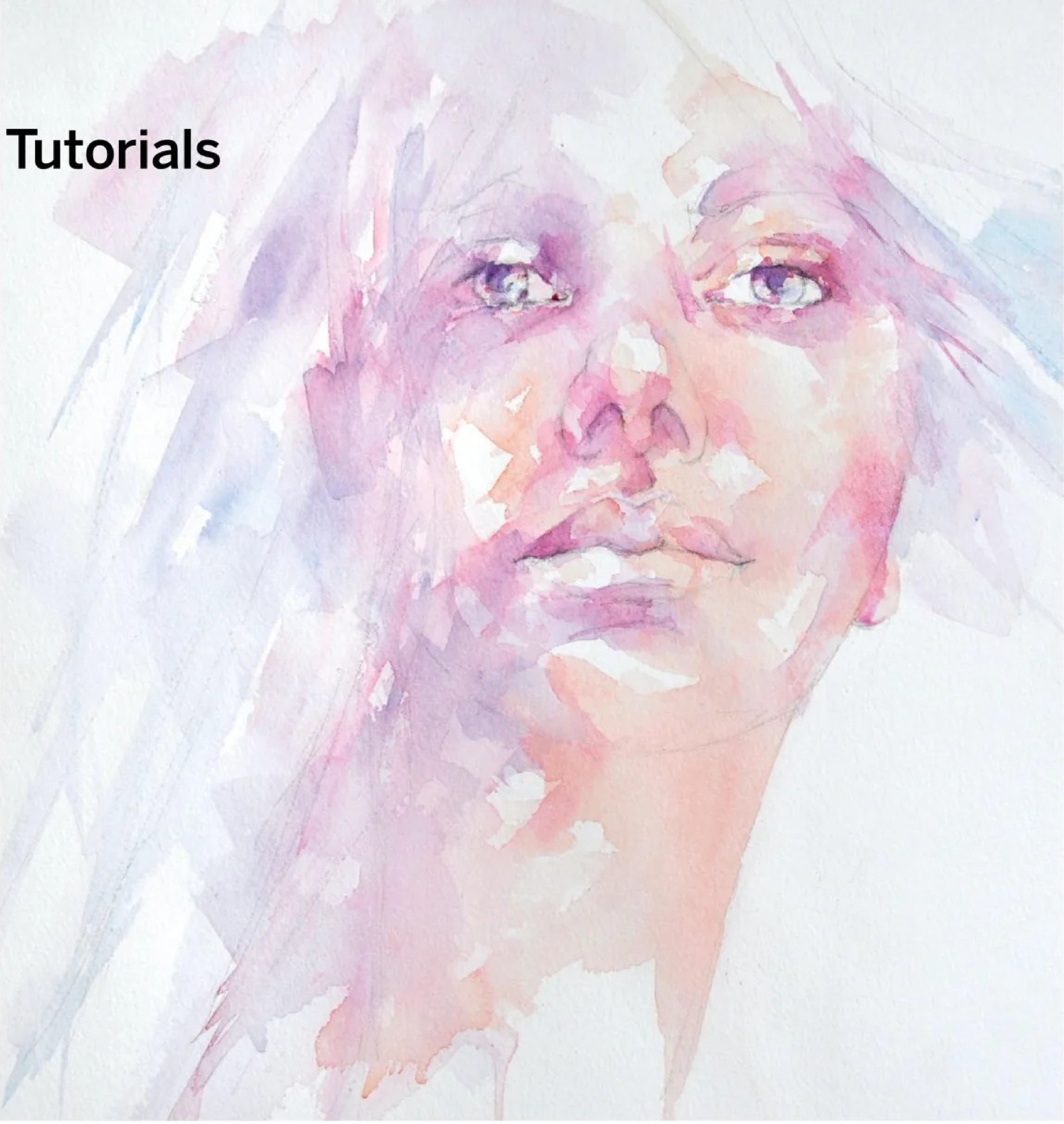
9 ◀ Creating form

This stage of the painting becomes more detailed to build up the shapes of the eyes, nose and mouth. Darken the nostril area taking it down under the bottom lip, around the chin and over to the left, into the hair. Joining these areas of the face creates a unity in the portrait and connects the features. This is a warm area so I started with Permanent Rose, gradually adding more Cobalt to it for variation as I went across towards the hair.



10 ◀ Adding drama to the eyes

Once again, add colour to the pupil area, this time with more Permanent Rose. With a wet rigger, using the side of the brush, pick up the pigment taking it into other areas around the eye and out to form some of the hair. Using smaller brushes will help keep your shapes smaller where needed. The level of detail at this stage of the painting puts the expression into the eyes. While the area is still damp, drop in a touch more pigment to deepen the tone.

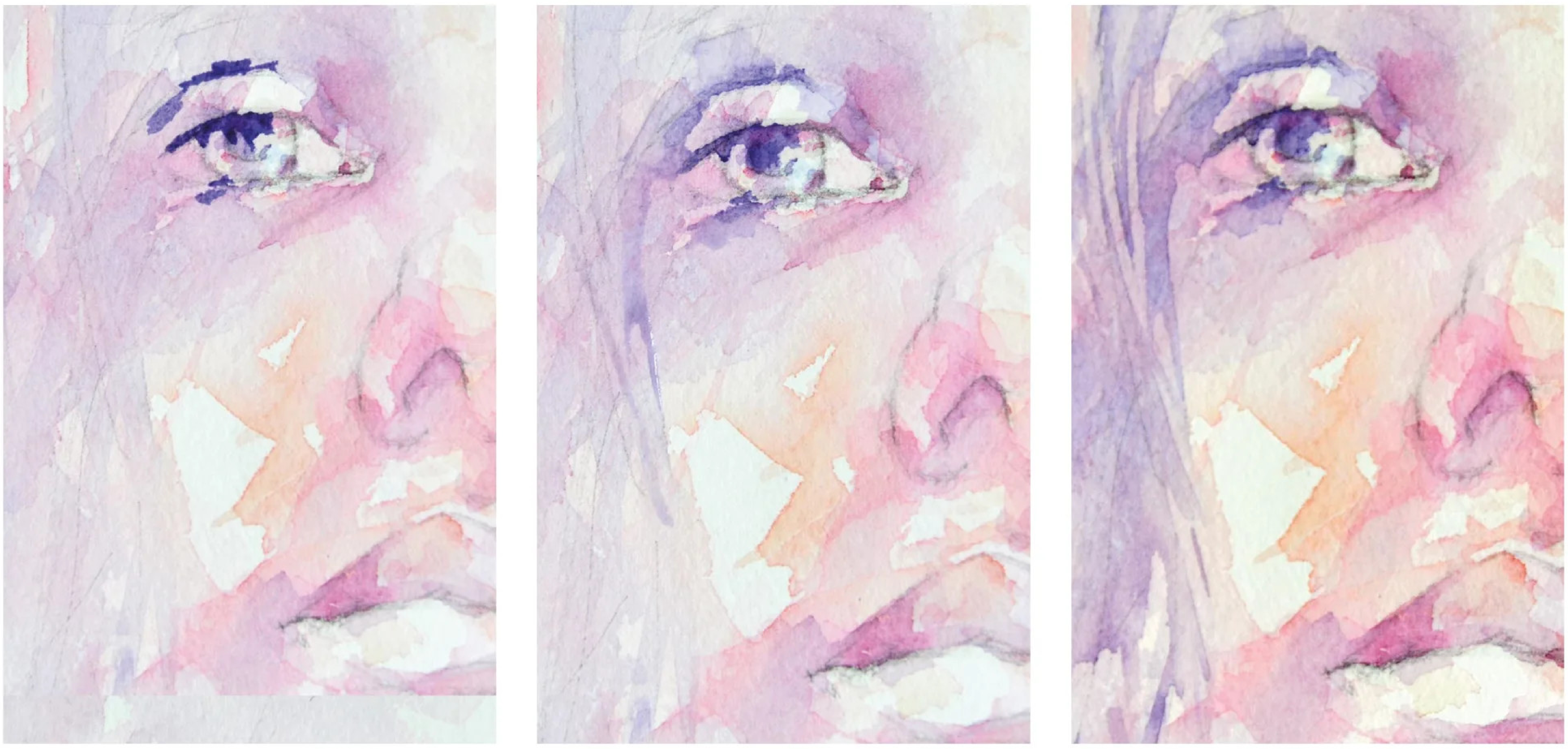


11 ◀ Forming the features

Carry on throughout the face, building on the mid-tones to form the features. Where there are areas of light retain this by creating fewer layers. You can see on the upper lip that I've added many small shapes, avoid painting this in one go. This helps to provide interest as you build layers to form the shape of the lips. Pay attention to the darker areas in shadow and away from the light. These should have more layers than the lighter areas.

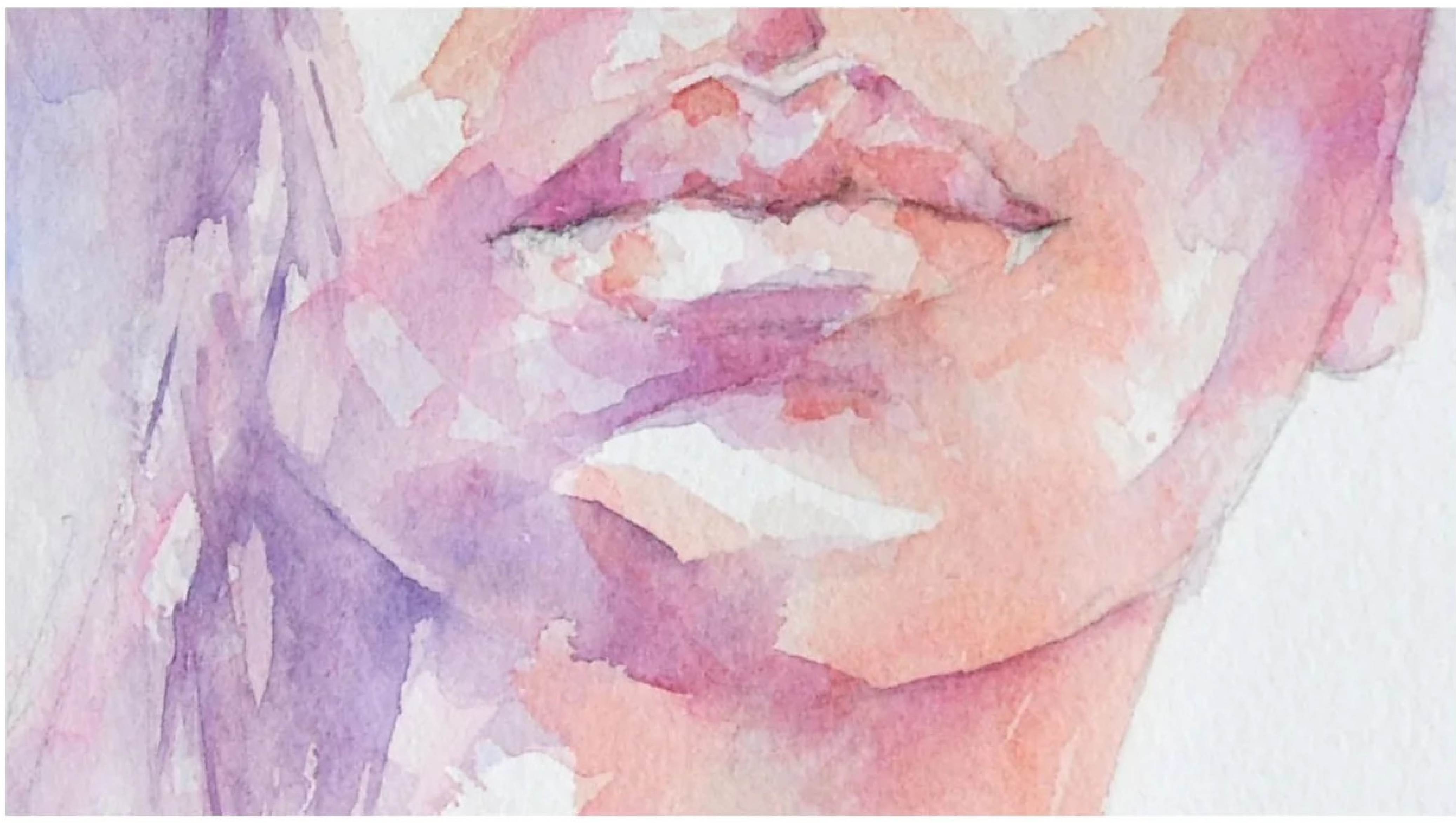
12 ▼ Bringing in detail

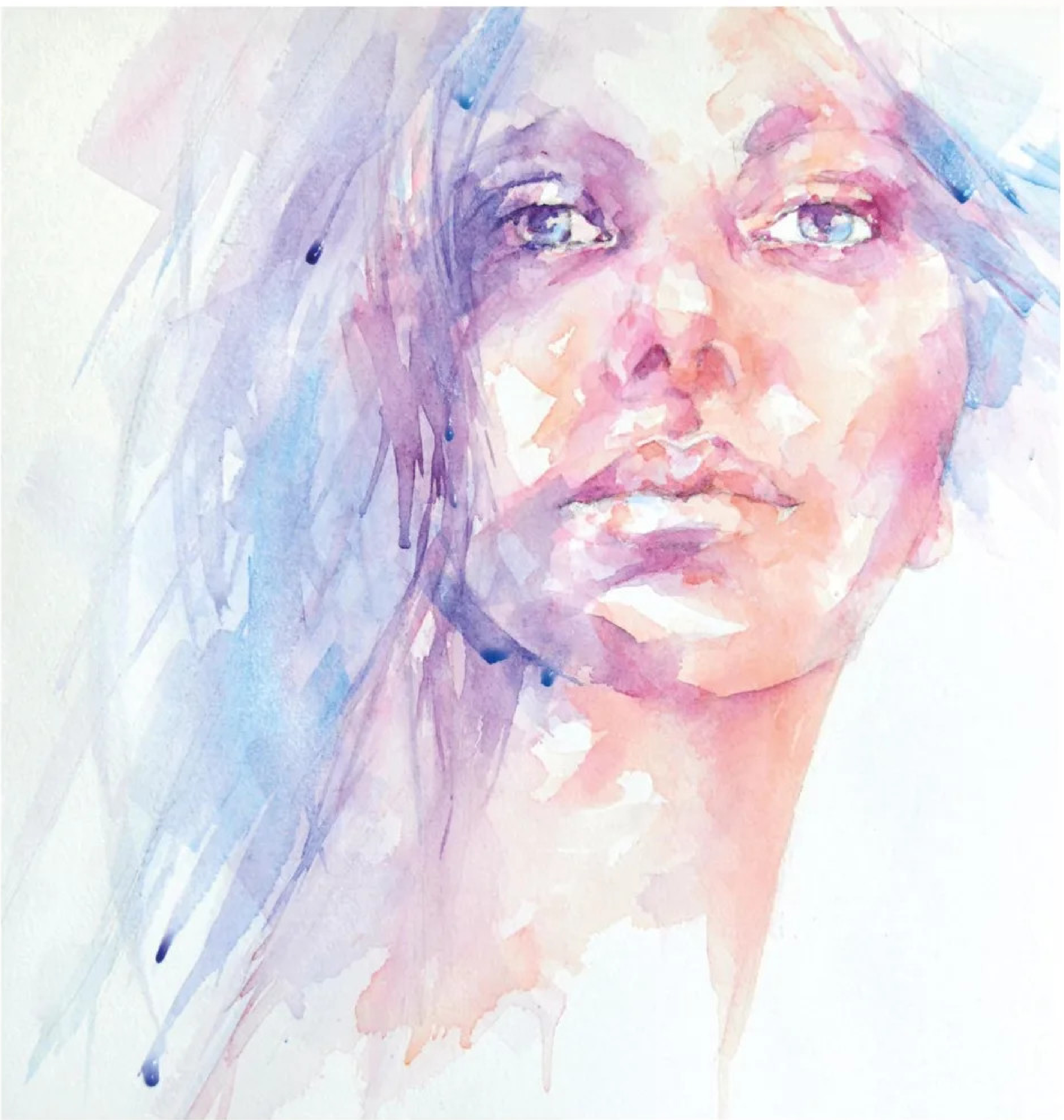
Once you have a foundation of shapes you can start to add more detail. Go back to the eye, this time with the darker blue mix, start with the pupil, bring it out to form more of the upper lid and to represent eyelashes. Soften up to form the outer areas of the lid and crease, and over to start building the hair. Keep it soft at this stage, remembering you can always add more later.



13 ▶ Positive and negative

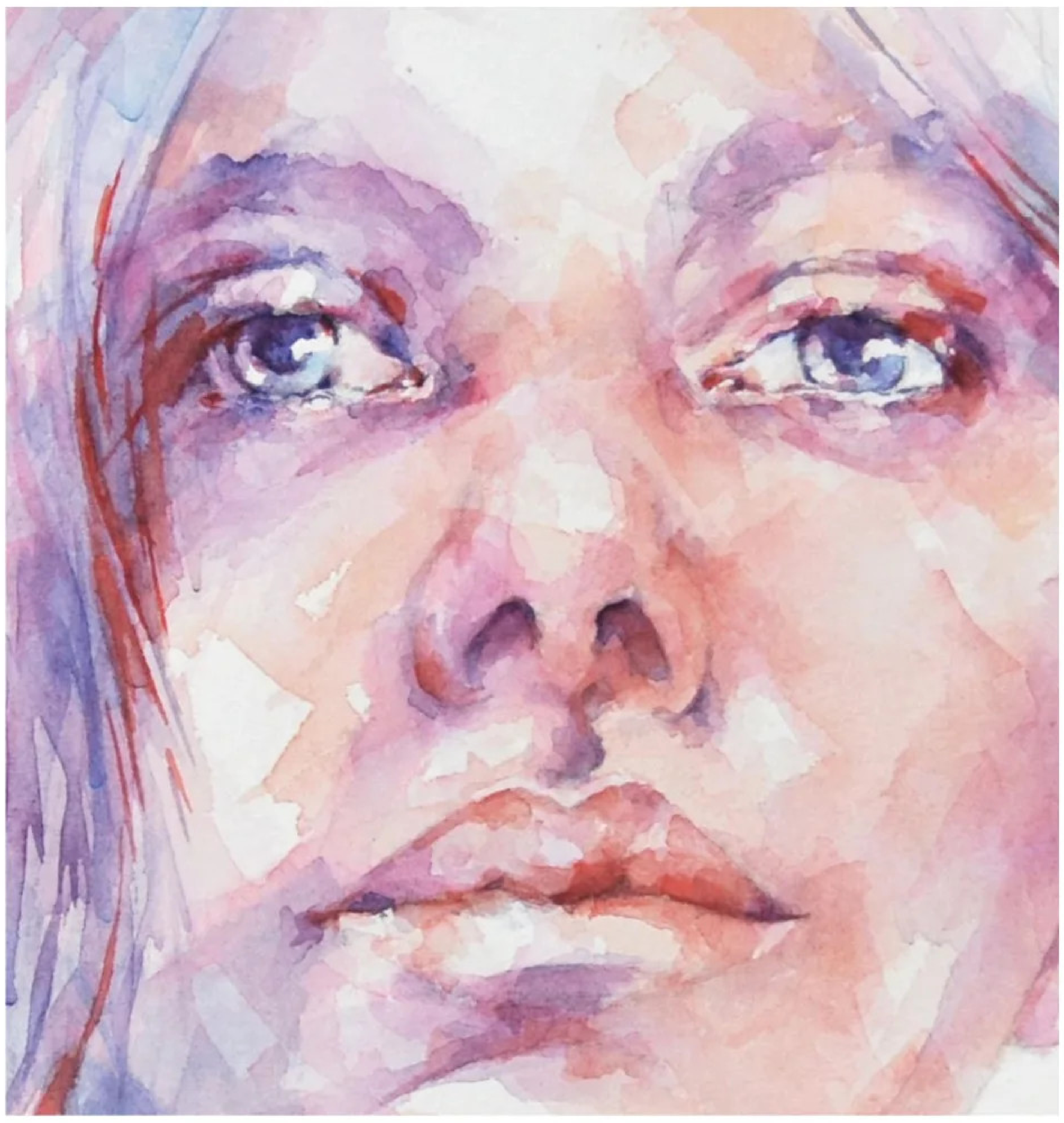
While adding further shapes around the face, start to form the edge of the face. This is done by placing a positive shape on the chin directly under the bottom lip, and taking it under the chin (negative) onto the neck, creating a shadow between the side of the face and the hair at the neck line. The lighter, left side of the face will appear to come slightly forward, in contrast. This is a very useful technique that can be used in many places.





14 Abstracting

Use pure blues add random shapes and abstract marks, keeping the lighter blues in the light. This will add more drama and looseness to your subject. This step can be quite daunting at times, but learn to step back form your work to see how all the areas work together. Remember that watercolour becomes much lighter when dry so what may look too dark when still wet will actually be exciting and dramatic once it is dry.

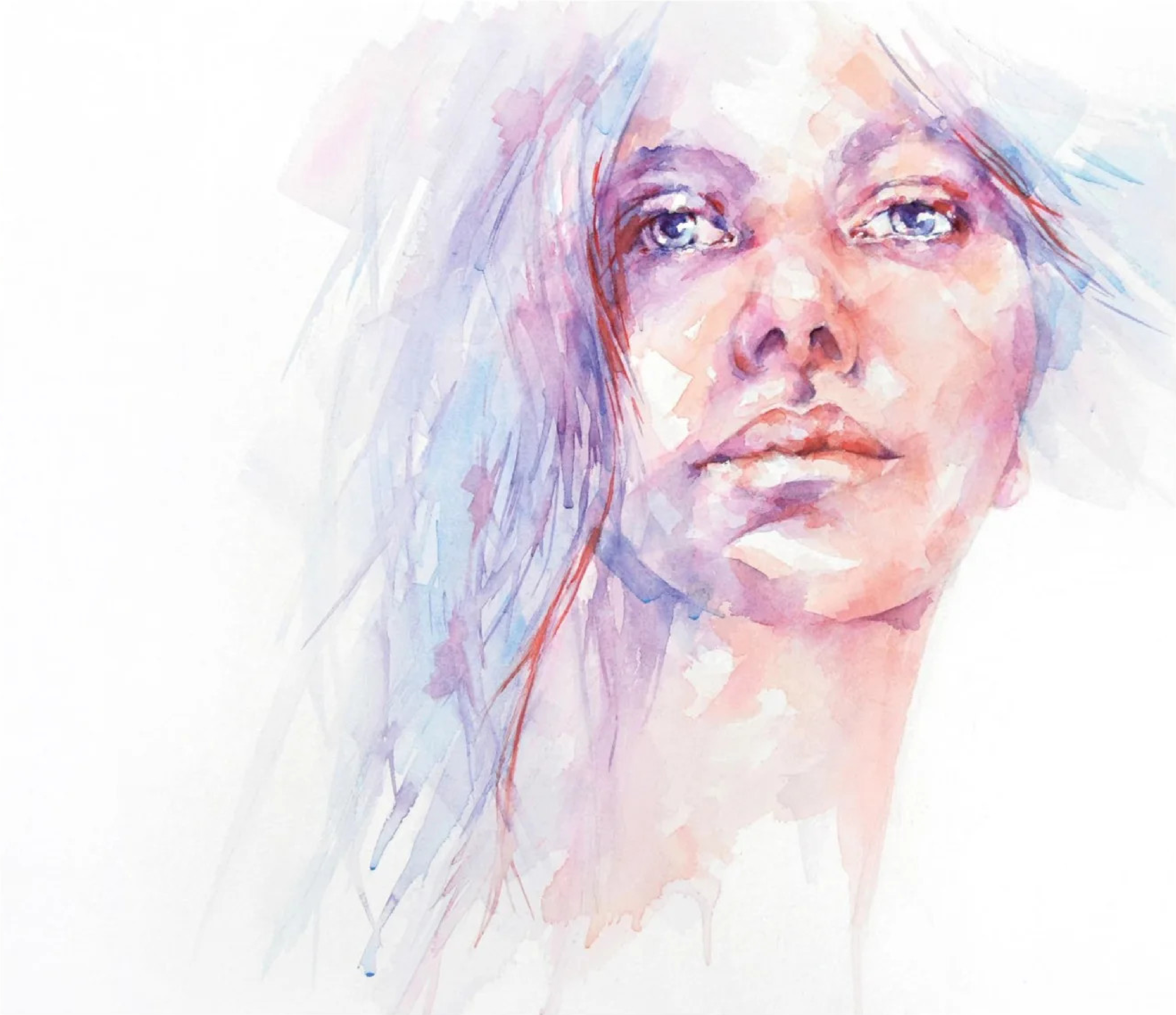


15 Accent colour

I call this my go-to colour. I often find nearing the finish, the painting needs a colour to lift it. For me, that colour is red, but this will depend on the emotion you are feeling in your work. Do this slowly, adding a bit at a time. It is very easy to overdo it. I've also used it in very diluted form washes to add warmth to the face. Cadmium Red will be very bright when wet but darkens as it dries.

Your reference

You should instinctively know when you see a photo that you want to paint. Painting portraits is a passion, a feeling, wanting to capture a moment, to explore the story behind the eyes. Use the photo to guide you, don't be a slave to it and stop when the story is told.



> "Do this slowly, adding a bit at a time. It is very easy to overdo it"

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Create more interesting skin tones with acrylics

Acrylic is traditionally a thick medium to work with, but **Dave Brasgalla** reveals how you can soften the effect to create natural-looking skin tones

Being synthetic, acrylics can tend towards a somewhat plastic texture and feeling – especially if you attempt to emulate oil paint by applying the pigment thickly. Things can quickly become glue-like and frustrating! I work around this by treating the acrylic as the water-based medium it is, building up many thin layers of subtle colours. It requires patience, but the results can be gorgeous, and you can achieve much more lively and compelling skin tones.

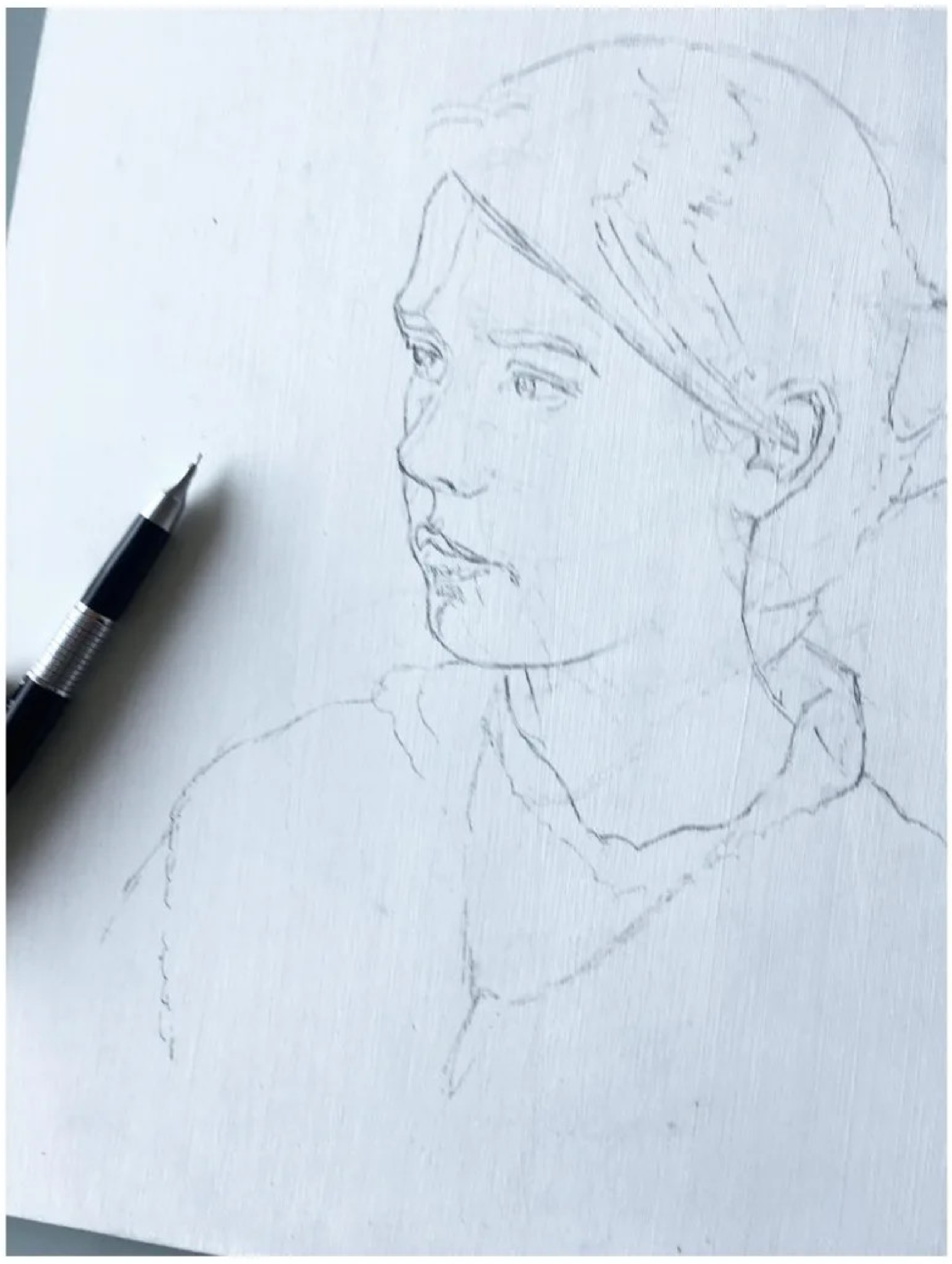
The key to this technique is to keep the pigment very thin on the brush – barely there at all. I mix the paint very thinly as well, and often wipe everything from the brush. A wet palette is vital when mixing, but even though this is a wet effect, I call it "dusting", because the final result can have a soft, powder-like texture.

Each quick wash can have a great effect, and the more you add, the richer the effect. Tight control of your palette can help control things as you progressively stack the washes. Naturally, it's important to allow drying time between washes so that successive applications of colour don't damage the previous ones. Those drying times are fairly short, though, since the layers are so thin. Be patient!

About **DAVE**
Stockholm, Sweden
Dave is an illustrator and graphic designer who has recently created cover and interior artwork for Sweden's Riotminds Games.
www.pixelhuset.se

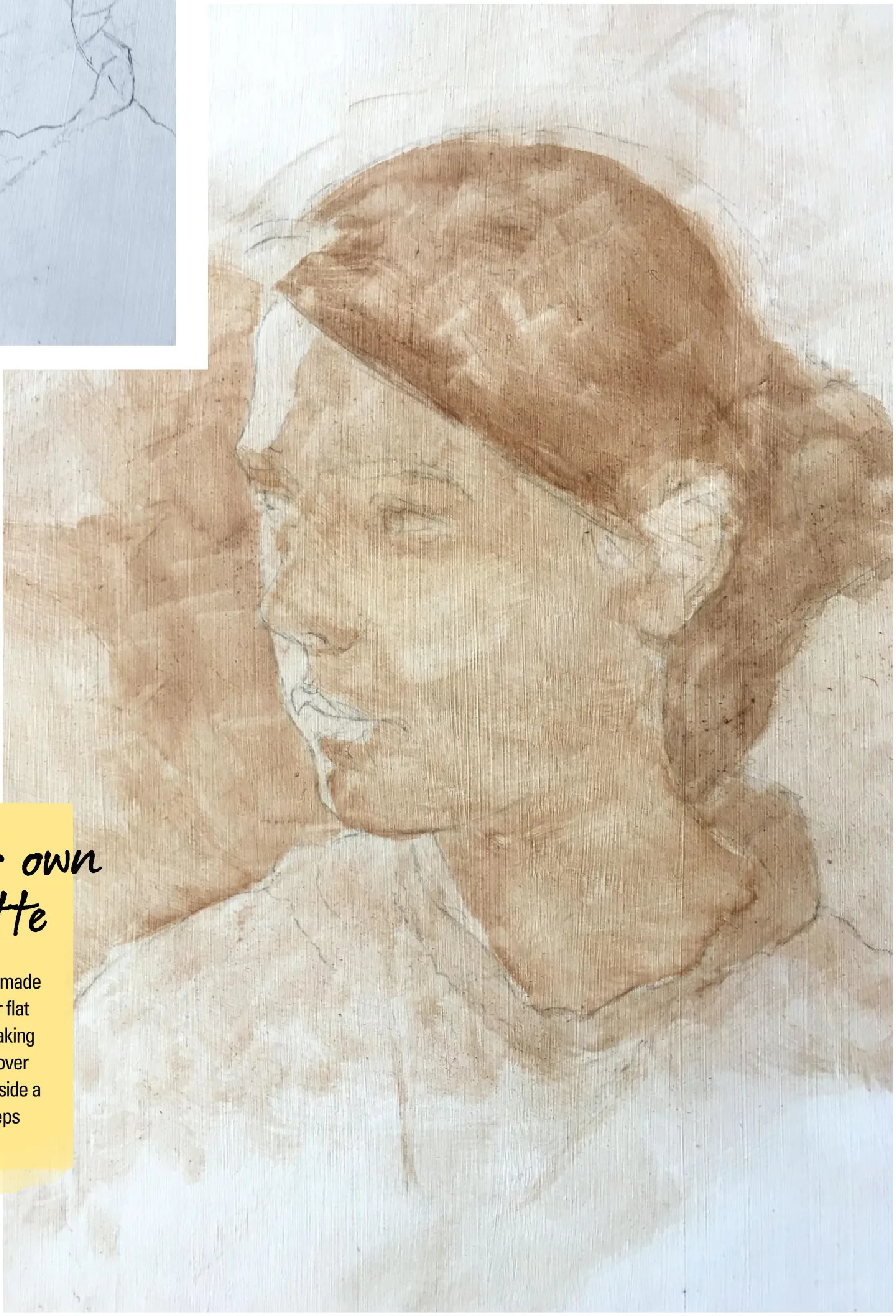
Materials

- ☐ Acrylic gesso
- ☐ Mechanical pencil with 2B & 4B lead
- ☐ Kneaded eraser
- ☐ Acrylic paints in Ultramarine, Burnt Umber, Titanium White, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow Light and Venetian Red



1 Prep your surface

"Dusting", as I call it, works best on a gessoed composite panel board – it absorbs fast and can take a fair bit of abuse. I do a pencil sketch on two coats of gesso, using my father's old mechanical pencil and a 2B/4B lead. Then I use a kneaded eraser to lift most of the pencil back off.

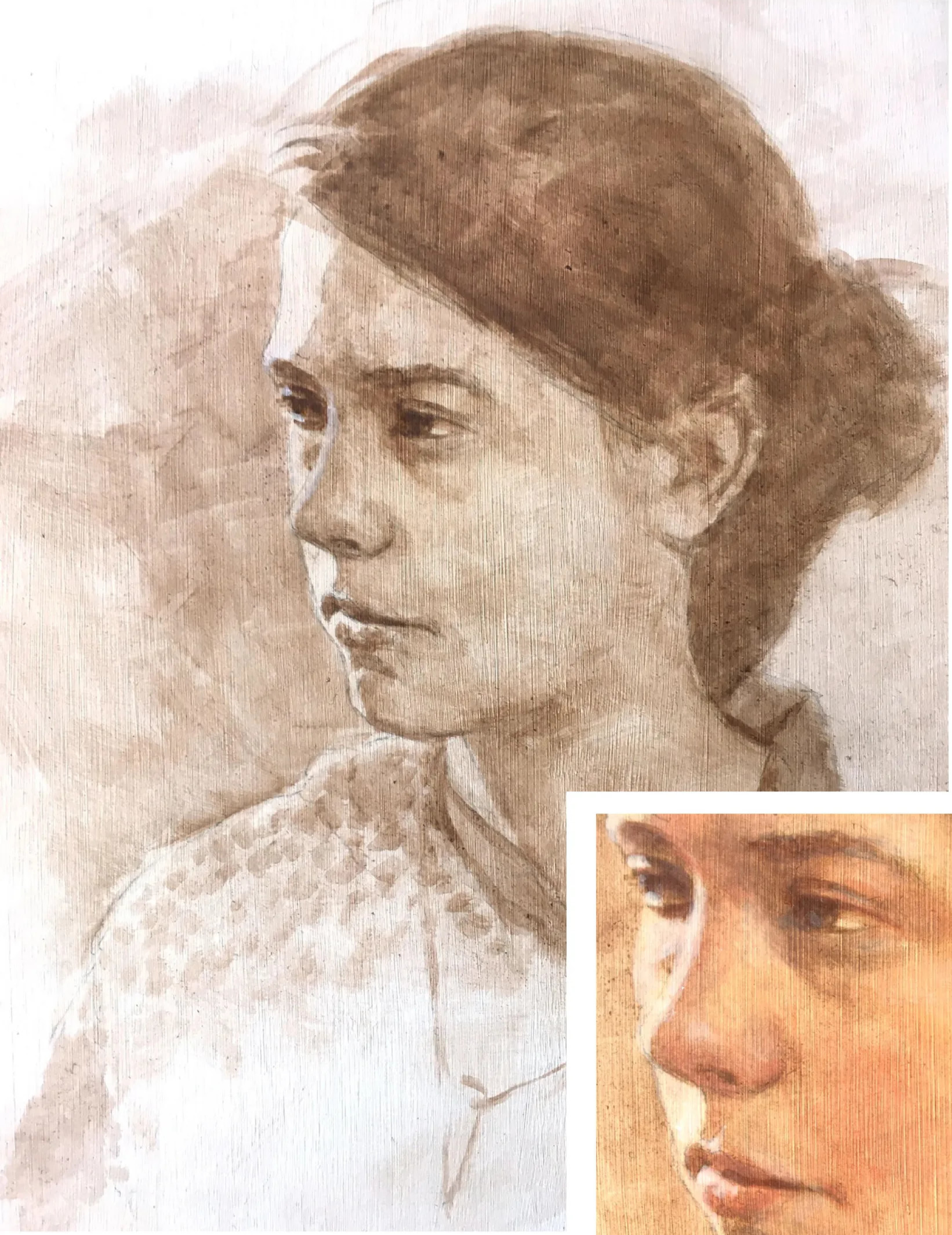


2 Wash the board

I then cover the entire board with a thin wash of Ultramarine and Burnt Umber. This seals the pencil from smearing any more, and I find the colour is a nice base for building skin tones on. I use a wide flat brush and try to create interesting marks to lie beneath everything.

Build your own wet palette

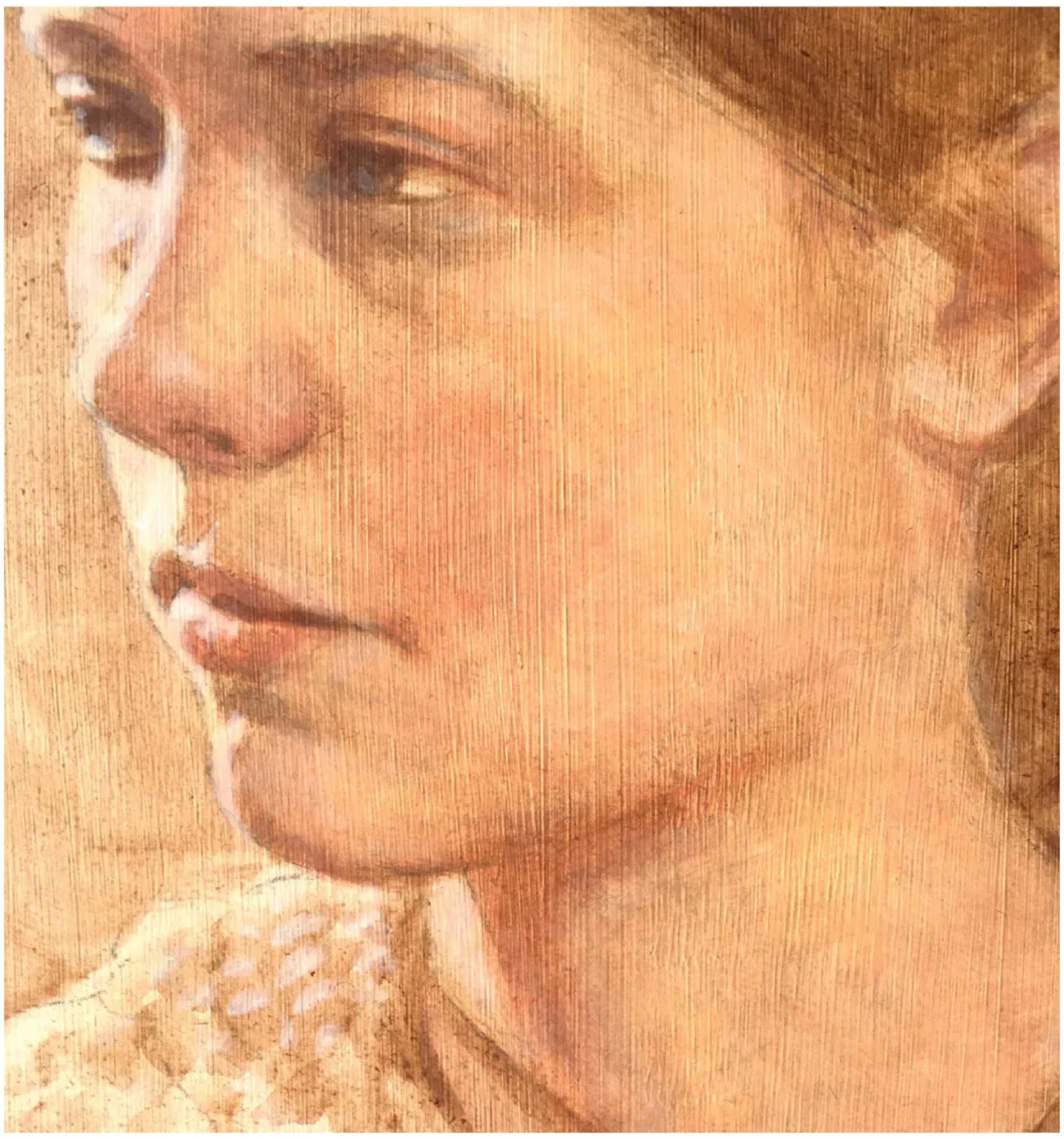
You can easily create a homemade wet palette using a sponge or flat kitchen wipe together with baking paper. Wet the sponge and cover with the paper. Setting this inside a sealable plastic container keeps yout pigments wet for days!



"At this stage I want to nail down the values so that in the next phase I can think about colour alone"

3 ◀ Add values

Now I block in the values (lightness or darkness), using the same mix but adding some Titanium White for more opacity. Even in the darkest areas, it is still very thin! At this stage I want to nail down the values so that in the next phase I can think about colour alone.



4 ▶ Warm it up

For skin tones, I use a very light wash of Cadmium Red and Cadmium Yellow Light, with Venetian Red and Titanium White added to alter temperature (Venetian Red is ideal here as it's so easily pushed warm or cool). I keep more saturated colours near the shadow transition edges.

Paint like Caravaggio

Follow **Rob Lunn** as he guides you through the painting process of the rebellious 17th-century master, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

About ROB

Bath, UK

Rob is a self-taught painter, and loves to paint in oils. His influences are Vincent van Gogh, Caravaggio and Ilya Repin. He has taught art workshops since 2012.

www.roblunn.co.uk

Materials

- ☐ Acrylic-primed canvas board, 9"x12"
- ☐ Rosemary & Co. Ivory standard-handled Short Flats (sizes 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and a size 2 Rigger
- ☐ Michael Harding oil paints: Ultramarine Blue, Green Lake, Bright Yellow Lake, Yellow Lake, Yellow Lake Deep, Scarlet Lake, Alizarin Crimson, Magenta, Ultramarine Violet, Titanium White, Burnt Umber
- ☐ Liquin Original (speeds up the drying time of oil paint)
- ☐ Kitchen roll
- ☐ Old Master's Brush Cleaner & Preserver (+ TLC)
- ☐ Bartoline Brush Cleaner

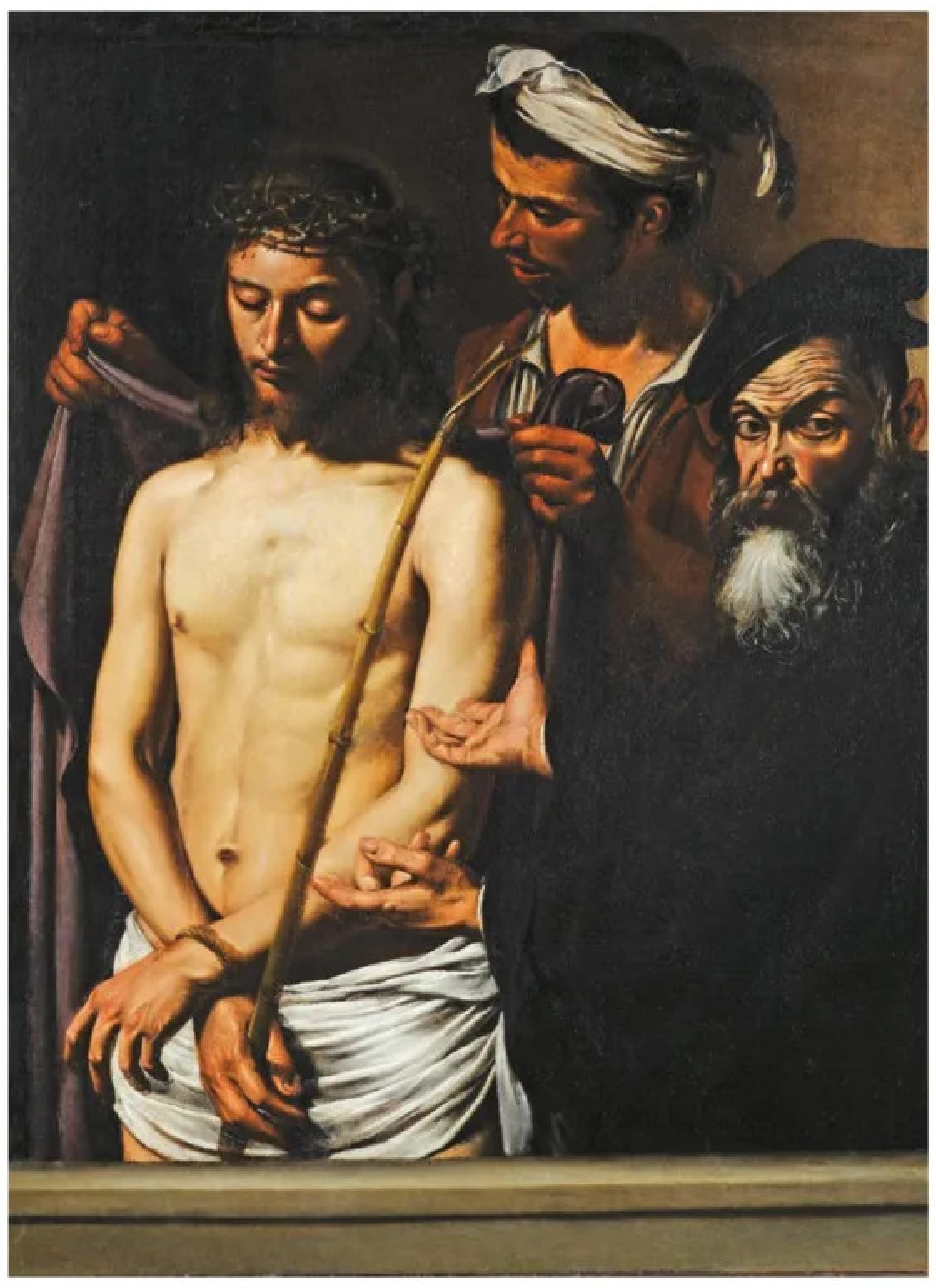
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, born 1571 in Lombardy, Italy, was the world's first rockstar painter. Spending a lot of his career on the run with a price on his head (he killed a gangster in a duel over a girl), the rebellious young painter turned the art world of 17th-century Europe upside down.

He revolutionised the levels of realism in art with his high-impact chiaroscuro technique of dramatic light and dark. He also challenged patrons by painting common people off the street as the stars of his masterpieces.

It's hard for audiences today to appreciate just how shocking his paintings were in their day, with that shock and awe spilling out into his private life, too. Caravaggio's favourite phrase was 'nec spe, nec metu', which translates as 'without hope, without fear'. His groundbreaking work still inspires artists today and is just as likely to be recognised in a Scorsese movie as on the wall of a gallery.

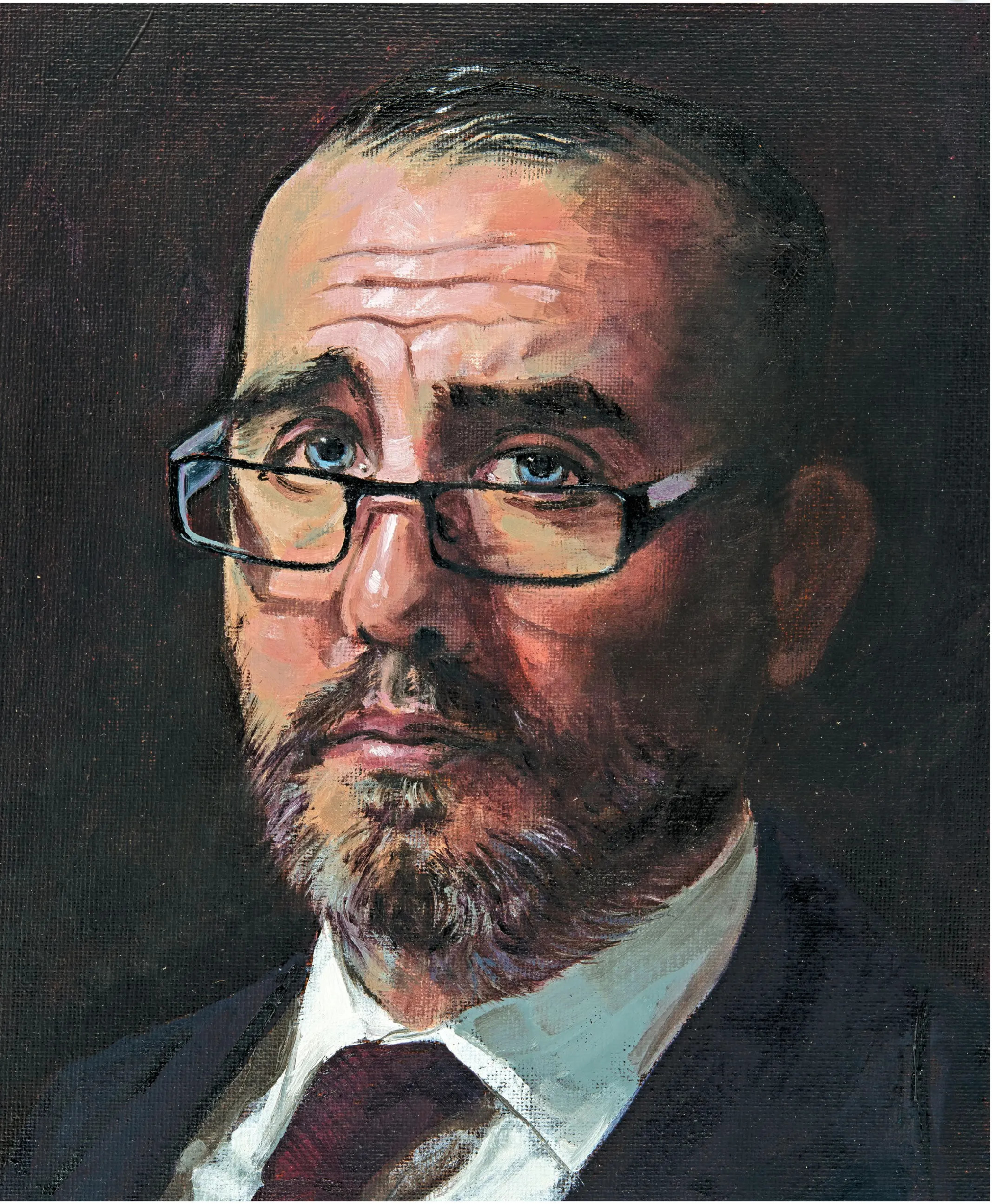
Very little anecdotal evidence survives about his painting technique, although there are accounts of him using mirrors and lenses, presumably to project his subjects onto his canvas. I can't profess to being a tenth of the painter he was, but I will let you in on what we do know about his painting process. I'm going to be painting in oils on a canvas board. Oil paints offer more working time than acrylics, allowing you to more easily work back into certain areas. There will be times when you want the oil paint to dry faster, though, so adding Liquin can come in very useful.

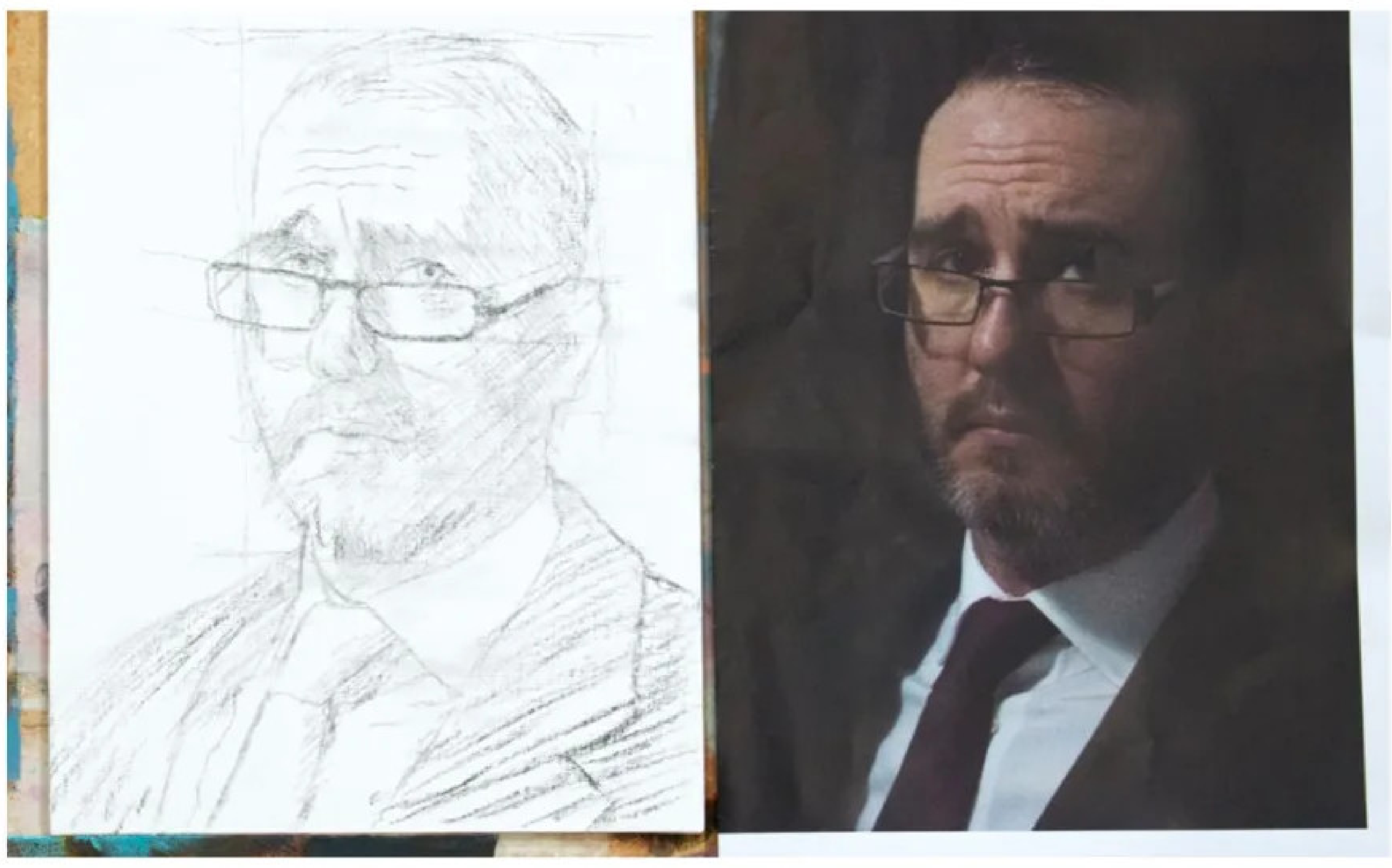
Take the time to ensure you have all you'll need to hand and that you're sitting comfortably. Once you get lost in a painting the hours can fly by. Turn off your phone and enjoy the process.



1 Failing to prepare is preparing to fail

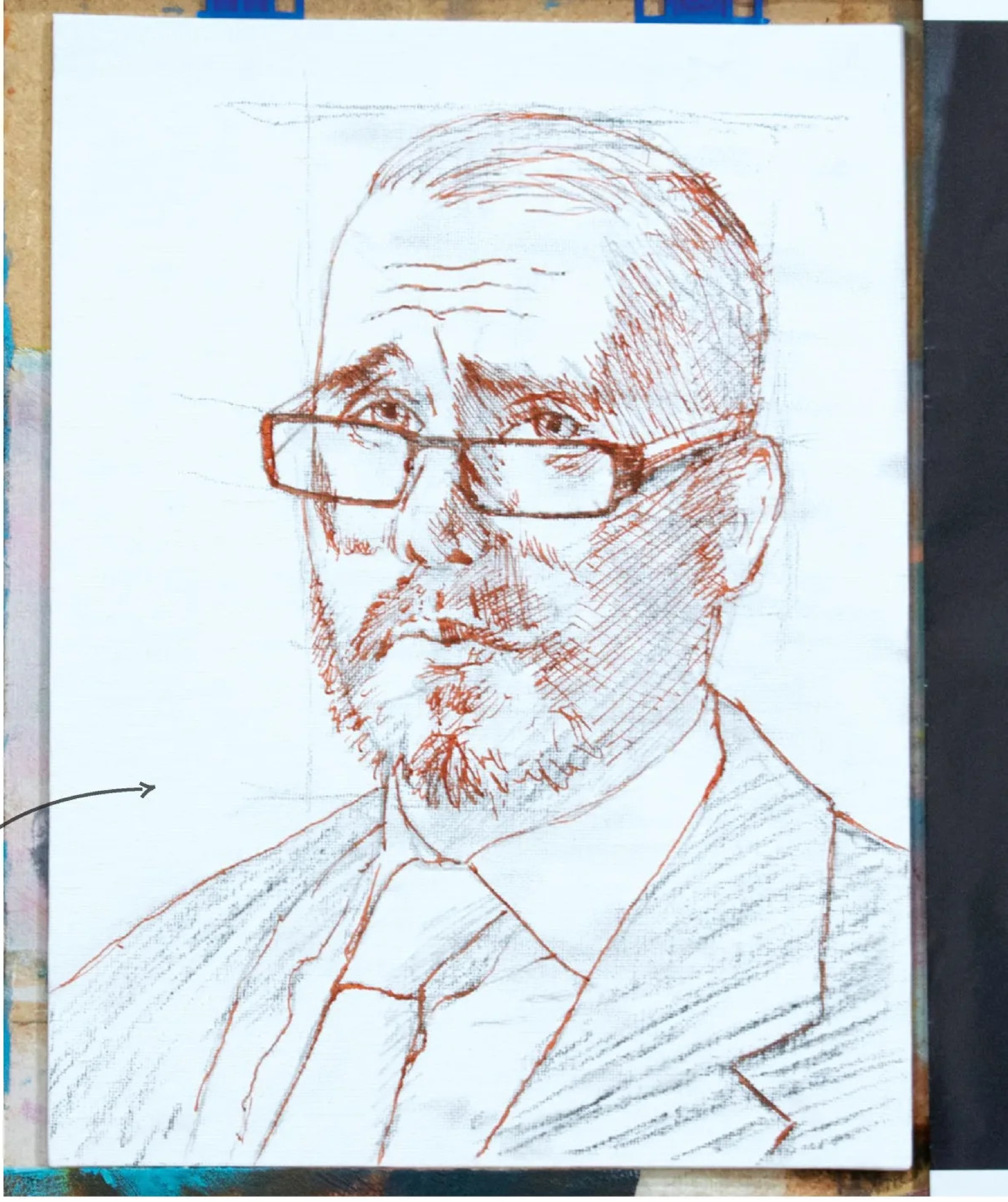
Instead of simply painting myself in heavy chiaroscuro, Caravaggio's dramatic use of light and dark, I wanted to add an element of narrative. As I wanted the main figure to be engaging the audience, I decided upon Pontius Pilate in *Ecce Homo*, the painter's 1605 retelling of the tortured Jesus being shown to the crowds before his crucifixion. Caravaggio set his paintings with a 17th-century eye so his subjects would have looked contemporary. My 21st-century Pontius Pilate will be a suited-and-booted politician. Time to dust off the old three-piece and set up a photo shoot.





2 Perform a dress rehearsal in charcoal

Caravaggio famously didn't make any preparatory drawings before committing paint to canvas, but I like to take a more tentative approach to my work. A quick and light charcoal drawing allows me to test elements within the composition before adding permanence with paint. This is called a 'gesture drawing'. I use a set of measuring callipers to double-check the proportions. The process is slightly more straightforward when, as in this case, the reference material is 0:0 scale, although it is possible to scale up or down using callipers with adjustable ratios of scale.

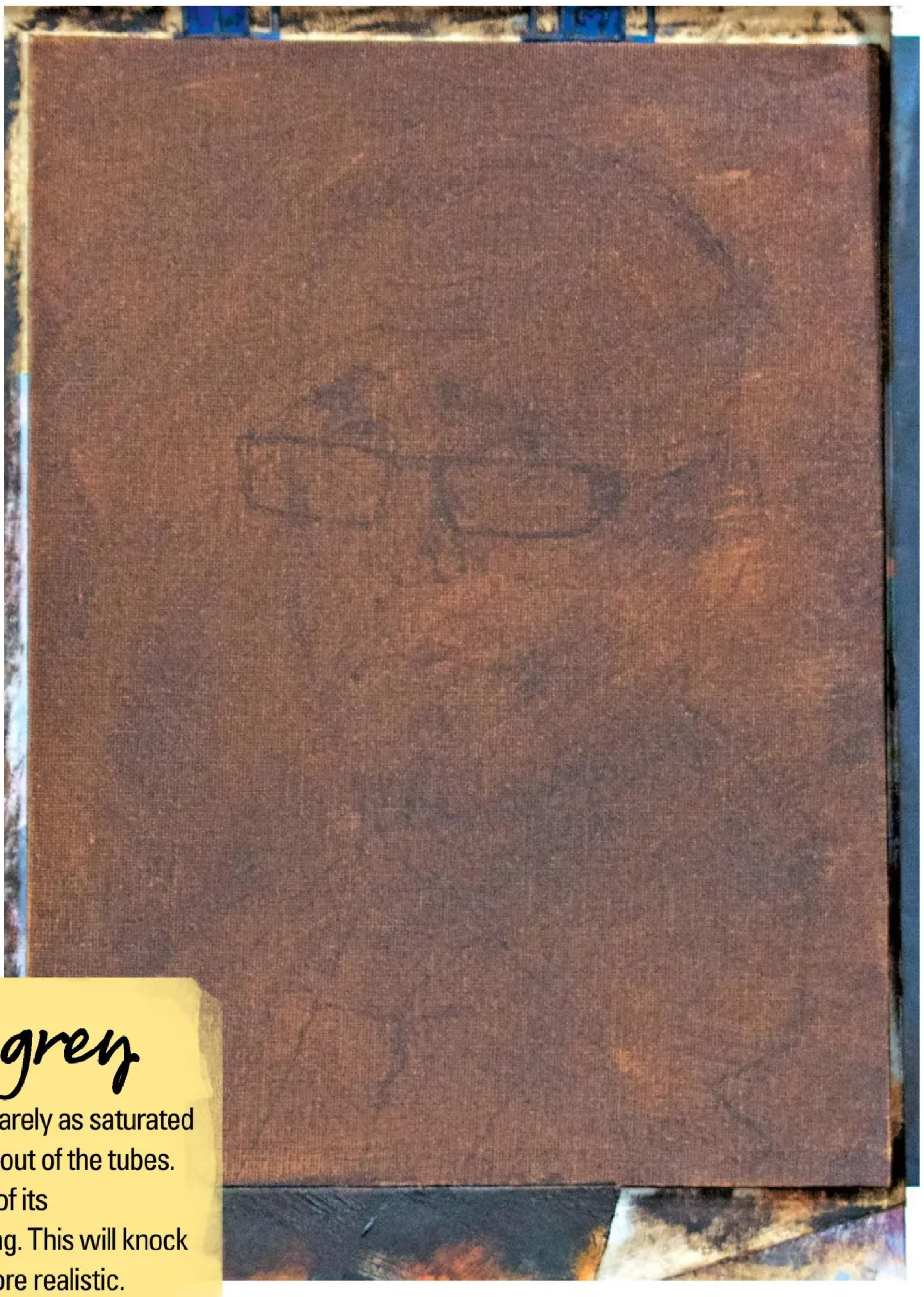


3 Lock in the form

Because I'm performing a gesture drawing and want some of that information to carry through into the next stages, I have to add permanence to my drawing by locking it in using paint. In this instance I've applied liquid acrylic paint using a fine pen, but a brush and diluted acrylic paint would work just as well. The main thing to remember is not to add too much information at this stage – you're creating a road map of your form that will show though the next stage when you apply your ground and, because it's acrylic, it will be dry in minutes.

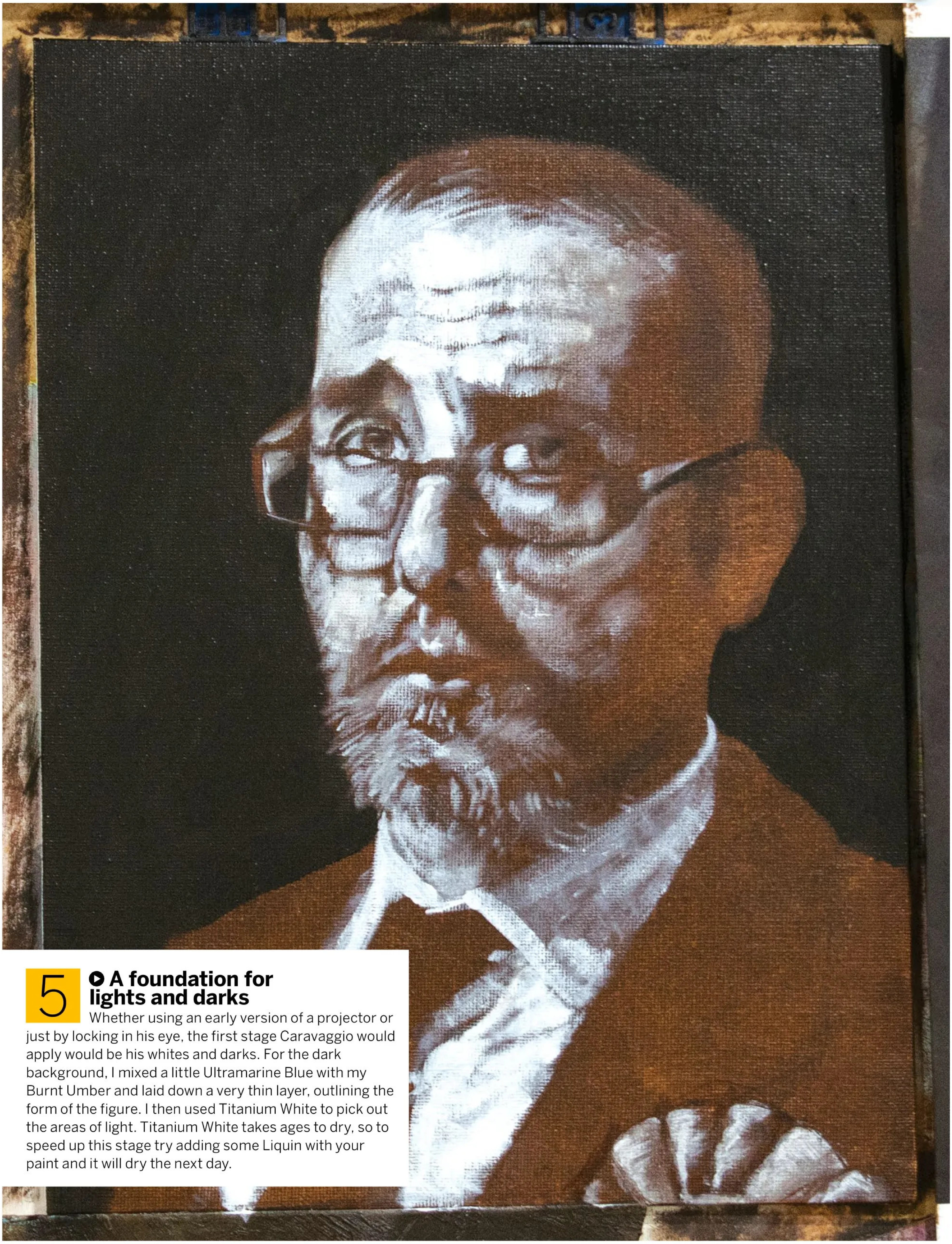
4 Ground your composition

A ground is a flat coat of paint applied to a primed canvas that you use as an element within your painting. This is the stage where Caravaggio would start, although there are reports of him using lenses and mirrors to project his subjects onto his pre-ground canvas to use as a guide, like a 17th-century projector. Our preparatory stages are our version of that. I'm using Burnt Umber for this ground as it will act as a mid-tone for most elements in my painting.



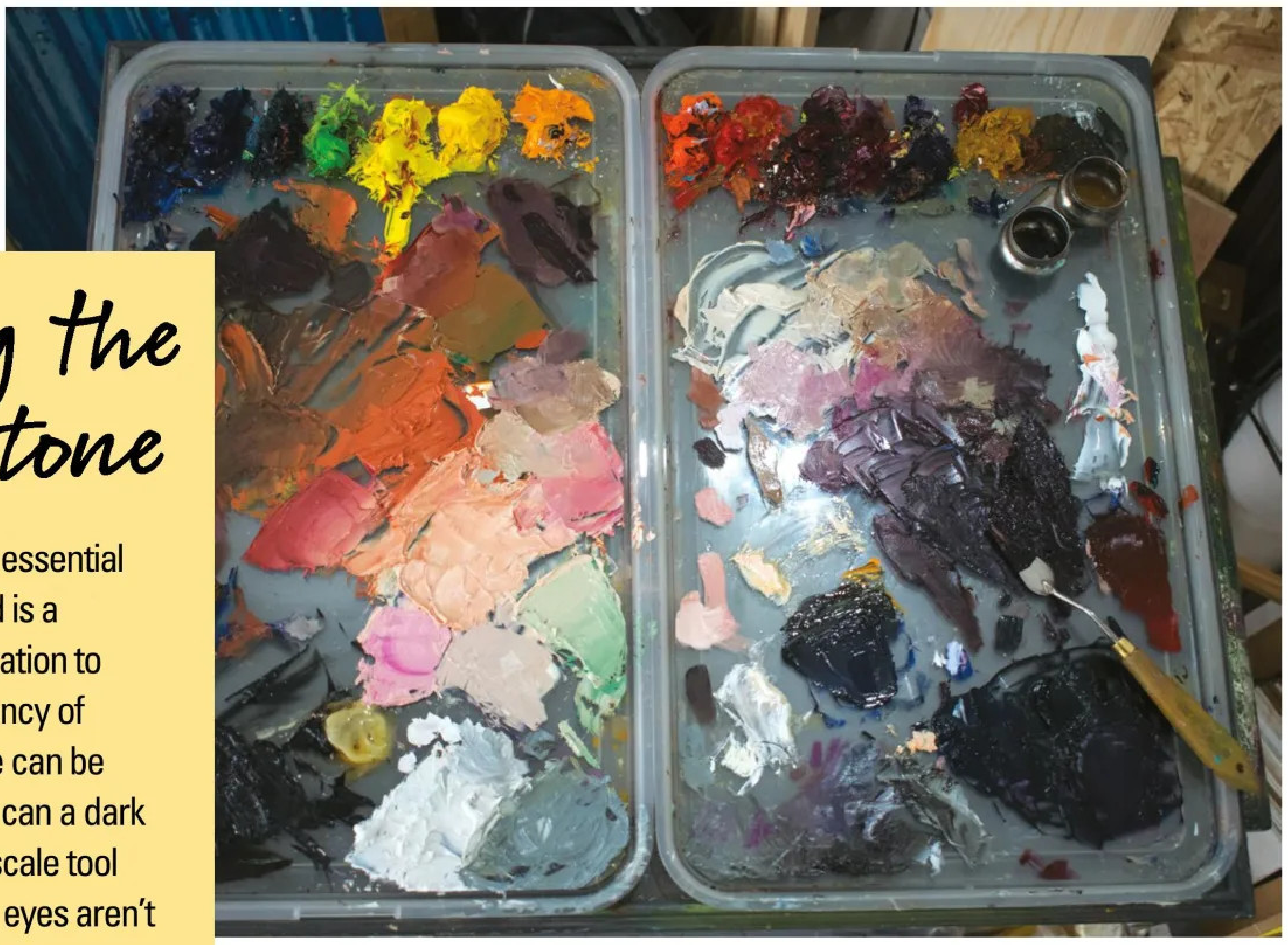
Shades of grey

The colours we want to paint are rarely as saturated and vibrant as the colours straight out of the tubes. To grey down a colour, add a little of its complementary colour when mixing. This will knock some of the punch out and look more realistic.



5 A foundation for lights and darks

Whether using an early version of a projector or just by locking in his eye, the first stage Caravaggio would apply would be his whites and darks. For the dark background, I mixed a little Ultramarine Blue with my Burnt Umber and laid down a very thin layer, outlining the form of the figure. I then used Titanium White to pick out the areas of light. Titanium White takes ages to dry, so to speed up this stage try adding some Liquin with your paint and it will dry the next day.

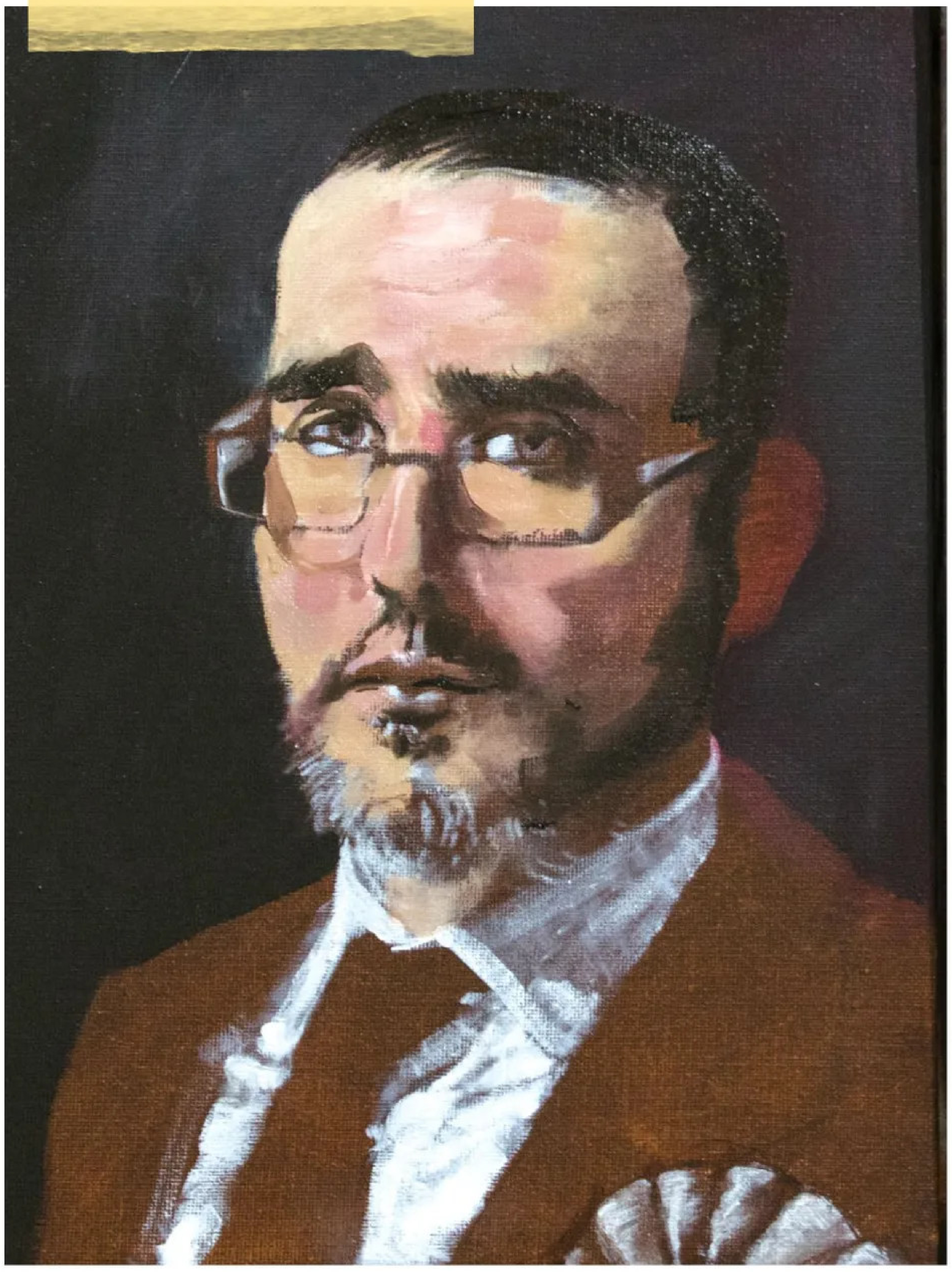


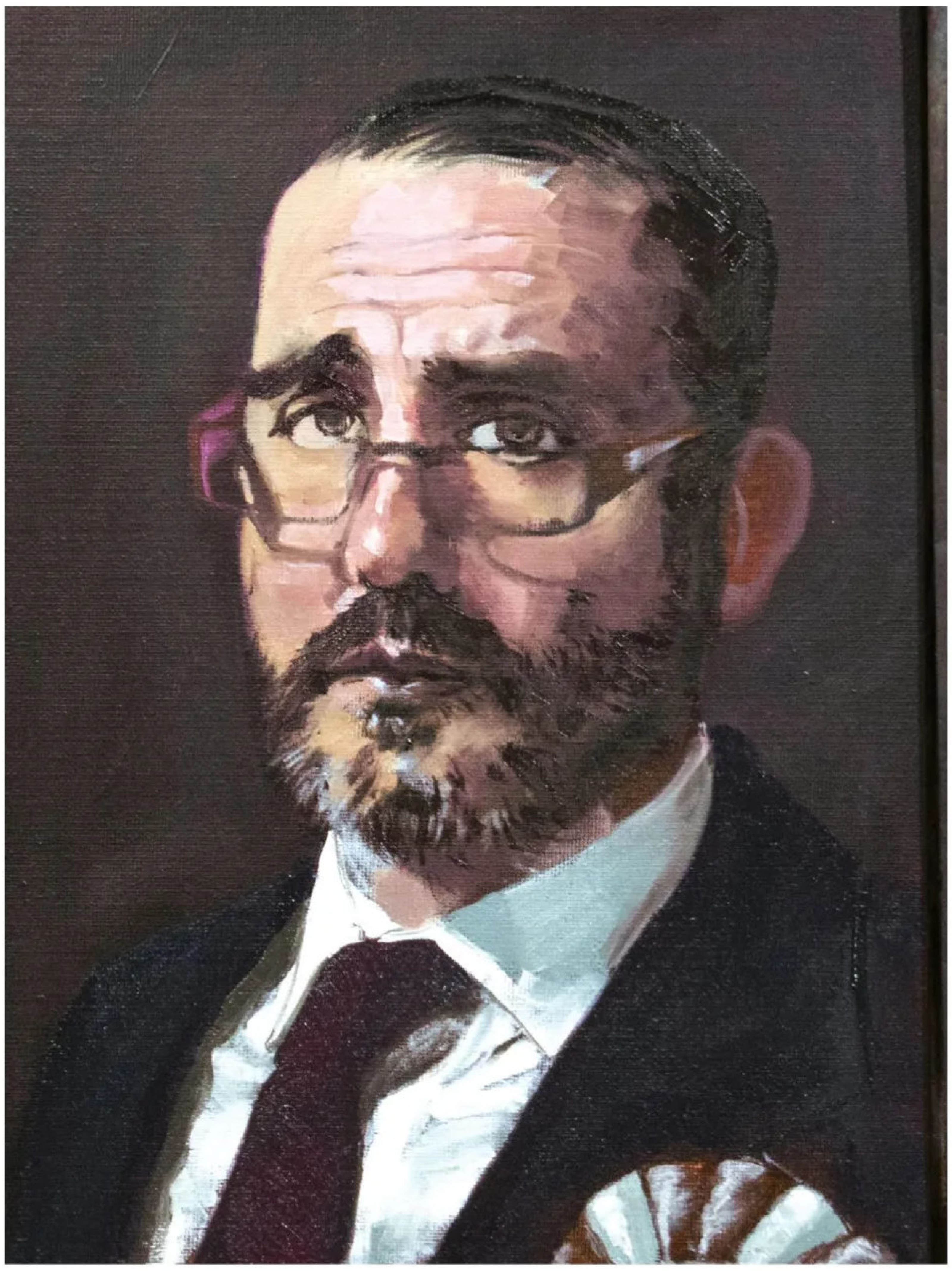
Setting the right tone

Thinking tonally is essential when painting and is a separate consideration to saturation or vibrancy of colour. A light tone can be vibrant or grey, as can a dark tone. Use a tonal scale tool to make sure your eyes aren't playing tricks on you.

6 Premix your colours

Premixing your colours will save you time in the long run. This stage allows you to just focus on the colours in your piece, without thinking about anything else. Take the time to analyse the colours in-depth and make a plan about colour relationships throughout the painting. You can tweak certain colours to add harmony and balance. The base of my skin tone is an orange made from Scarlet Lake and Bright Yellow Lake, greyed down with a little Green Lake and Titanium White. I then push this base colour out to many variations of dark and light skin tones.



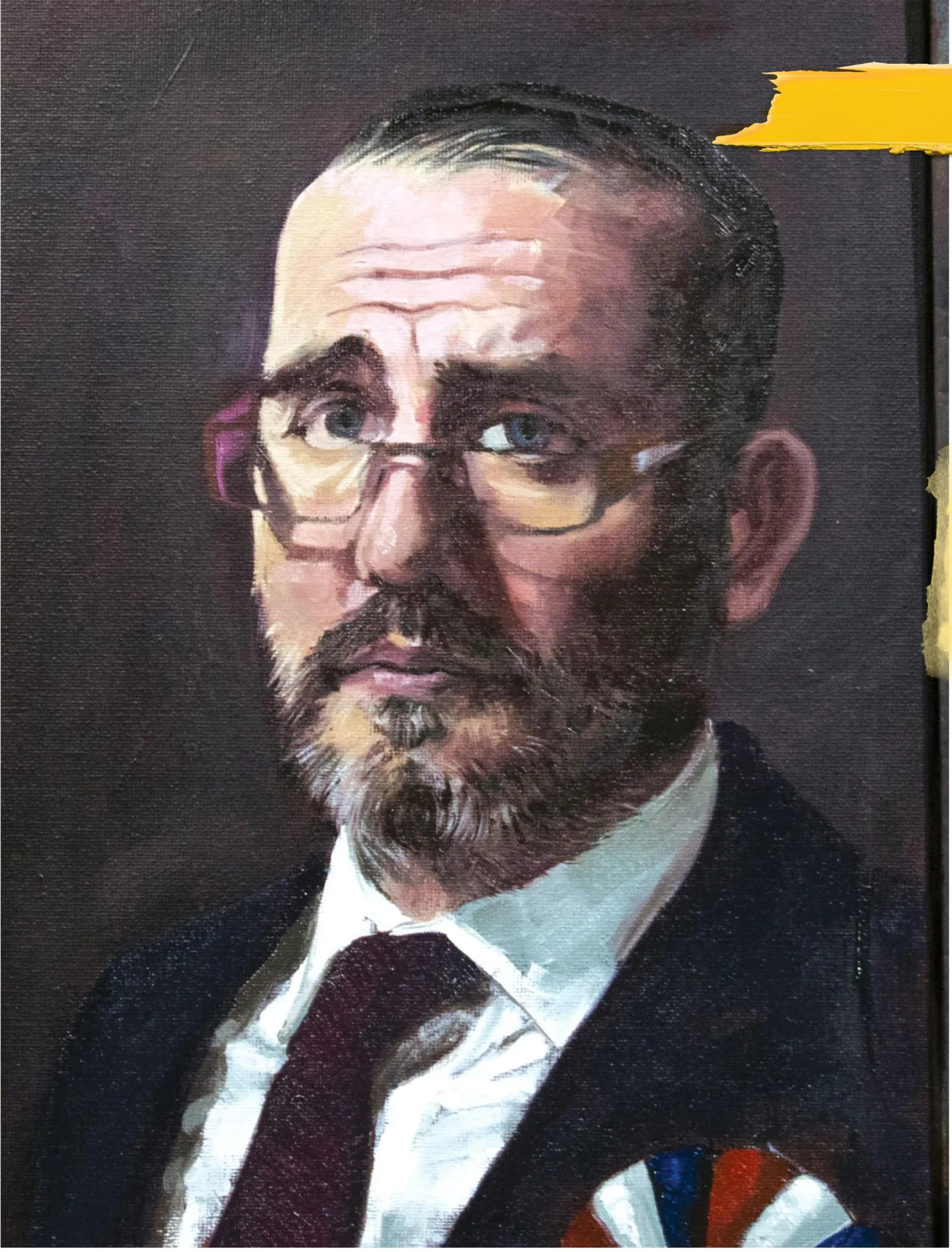


7 Block in your main shapes

It can seem like you're obliterating all the hard work done so far but take heart. All that preparatory work is the strong framework your painting will be built upon. Squint to reduce the amount of information and keep your brushwork loose and instinctive. Begin by painting in the large areas of information. Details like the glasses, highlights etc will come at the end. Where possible, use a bigger brush than feels comfortable to force yourself to be bold. Keep the dark areas thin, but you can add thicker layers of paint in the lighter areas.

8 Take a holistic approach

Don't get stuck on one part of the painting for too long. You need to think about the painting as a whole, and work on all areas of it, pushing it along as one. It's all too easy to completely finish one area, only to realise you've got the tone completely wrong once you add its neighbouring section. Remember, you're still looking at those larger blocks of colour, so don't get too bogged down in detail too early. I'm starting to add smaller brush strokes now but I'm stopping myself from painting in the eyes and highlights etc. They will come, I promise.



Rock steady

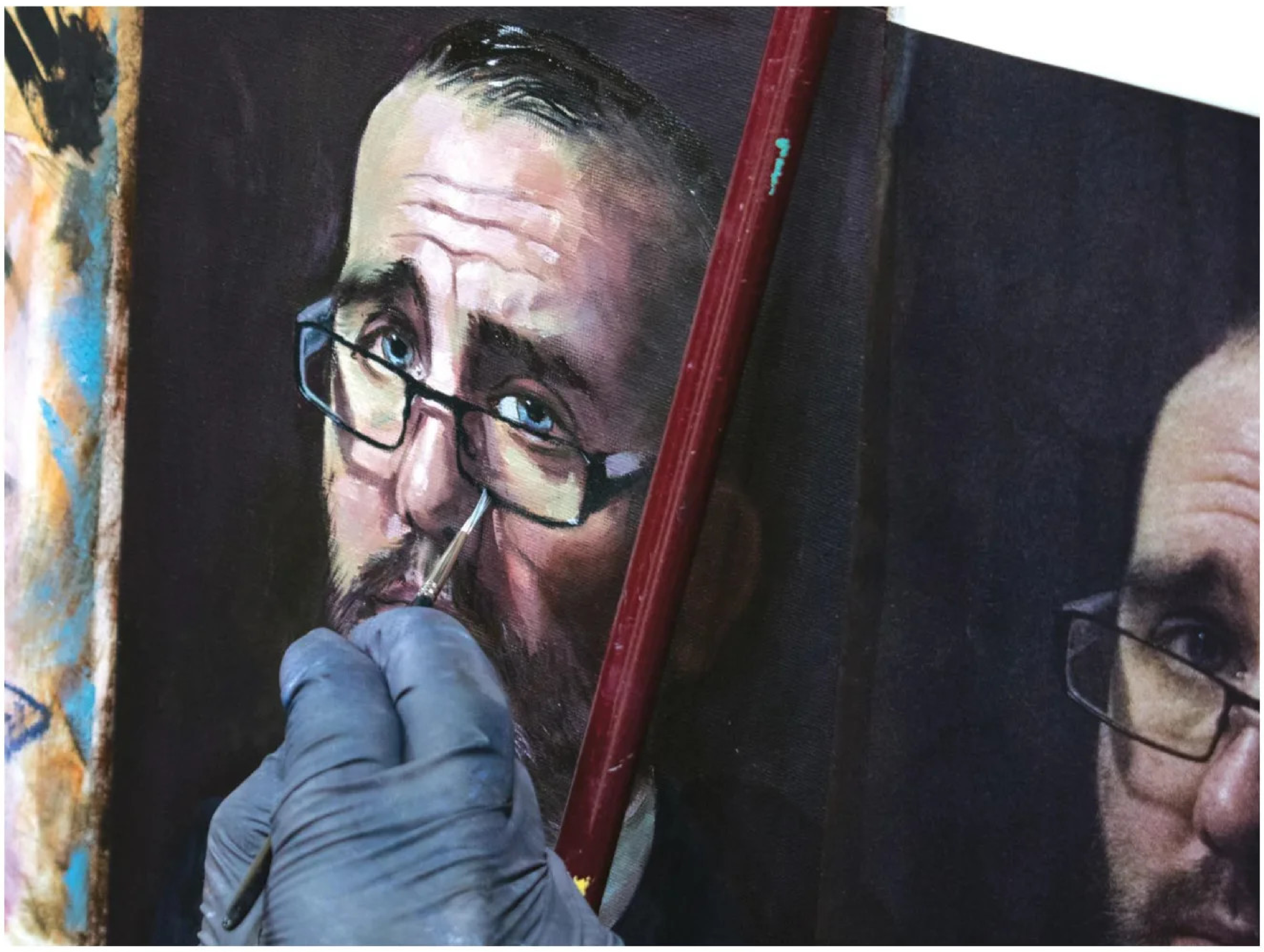
It's good to keep things loose at the being of a painting, but when you start to get into those finer details consider using a Mahl stick (as pictured in Step 10) to give you a greater degree of accuracy without leaning on the canvas!

9 Finetune the detail

I'm now starting to add finer and finer levels of details as I work through the painting. I want my main focal point to be the face so that's where I'll focus most of my detail and leave the surrounding areas reasonably loose. Notice I'm constantly rechecking and remeasuring. Each stage is a chance to refine and correct. I decide to deepen the shadows to create more contrast, which ups the feeling of drama. I'm also starting to look for more subtle variations of colour, not only within the light areas, but the within the shadows, too.

10 Finally, add the highlights

I'm now starting to add finer and finer levels of details as I work through the painting. I want my main focal point to be the face so that's where I'll focus most of my detail and leave the surrounding areas reasonably loose. Notice I'm constantly rechecking and remeasuring. Each stage is a chance to refine and correct. I decide to deepen the shadows to create more contrast, which ups the feeling of drama. I'm also starting to look for more subtle variations of colour, not only within the light areas, but the within the shadows, too.



Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

How to paint a nose

Kate Oleska explores the steps to depicting the face's central feature accurately

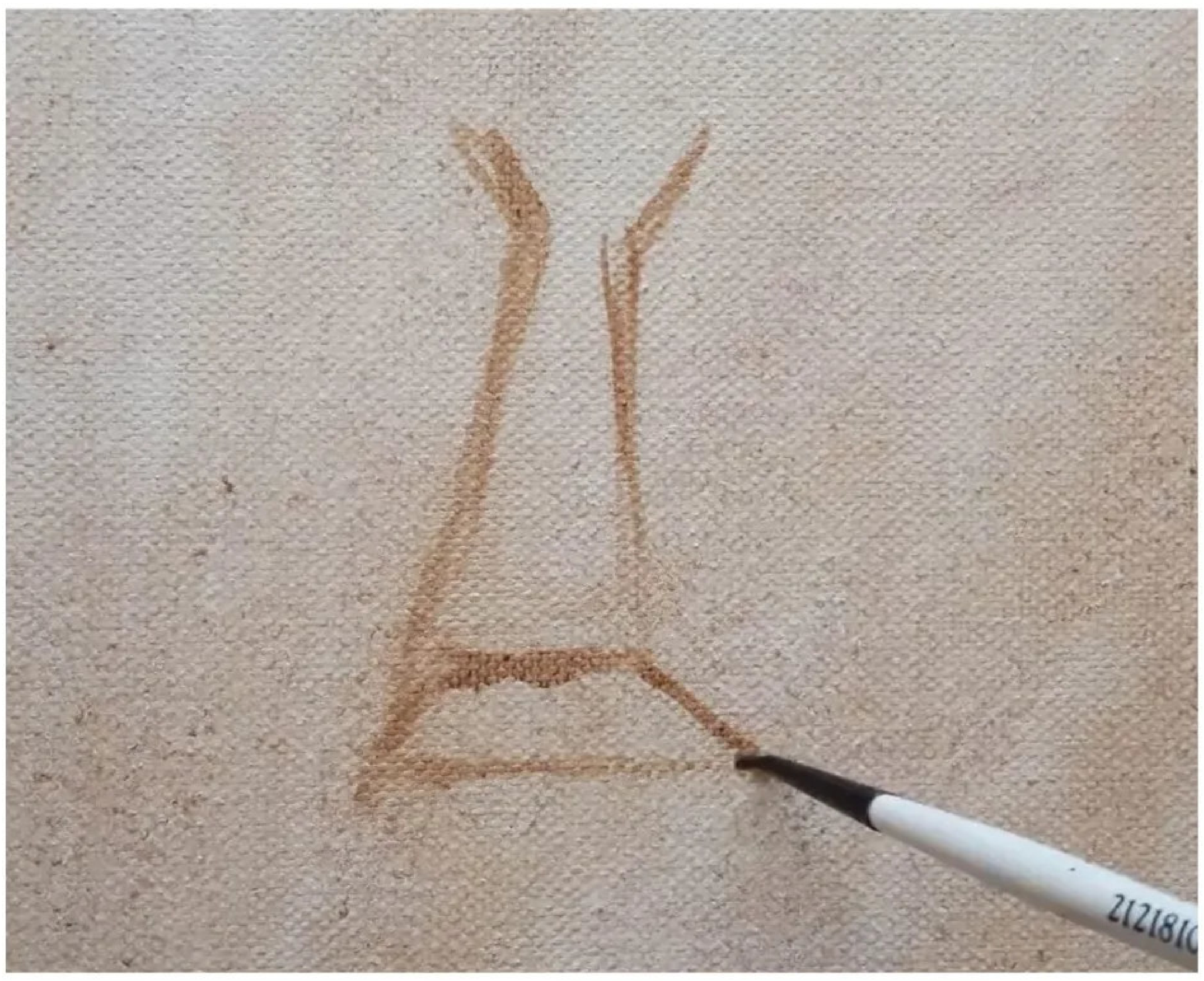
About **KATE**
Kent, UK
Kate is a digital and traditional artist working in oils and charcoal. She has illustrated numerous books for various international publishers, including 14 books for Terry Pratchett's 'Discworld' series.
www.kateoleska.com

One of the areas that beginner artists struggle with in regards to human anatomy is noses.

Perhaps it is the diversity of shapes that we see every day that makes it harder to understand their anatomy. In this short piece, I will give some tips on what to pay attention to when painting a nose.

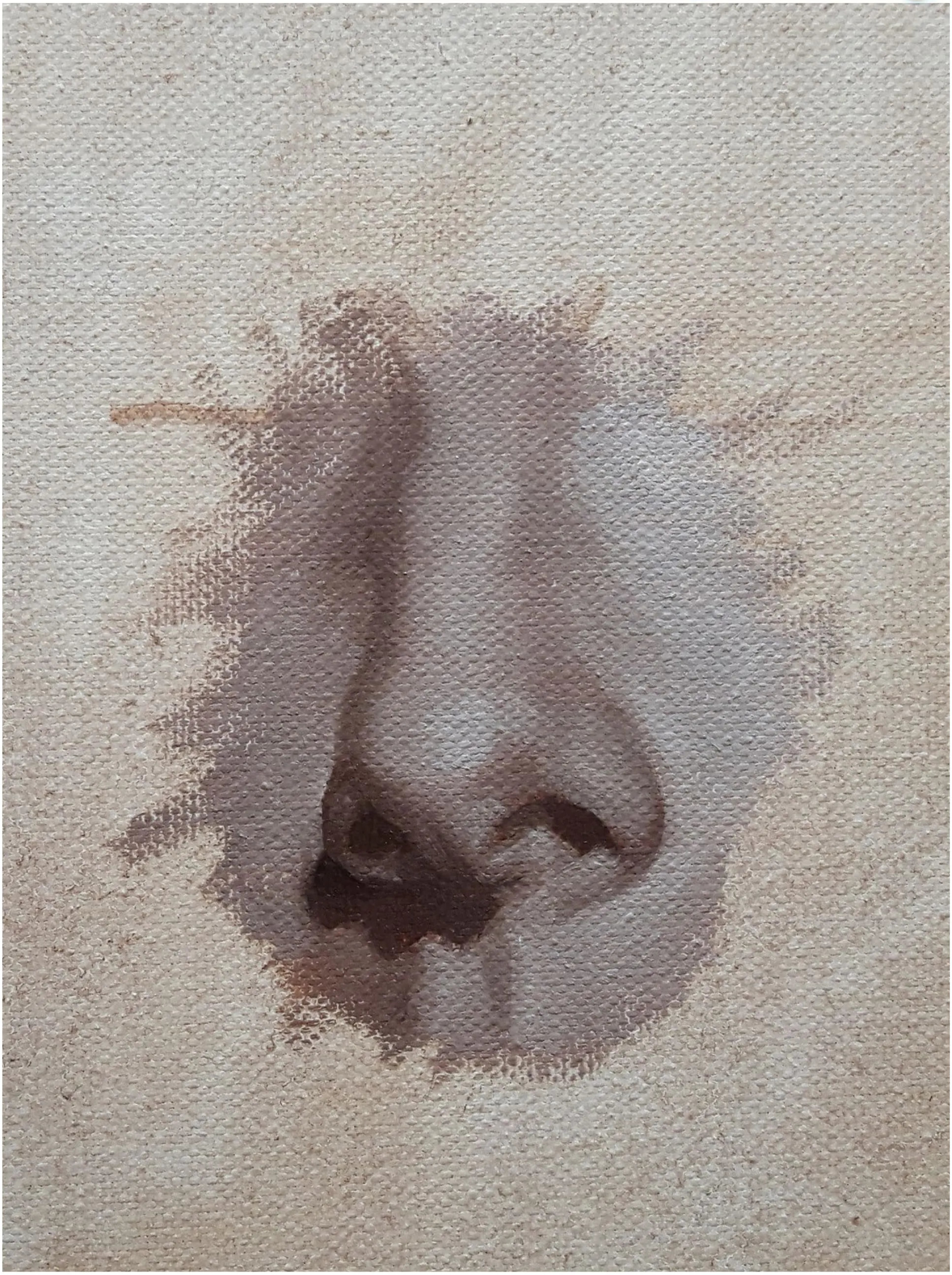
It's easy enough to assume that we know how a nose looks – and therefore how we should depict it in art – but in reality, the nose can be a complex feature to accurately re-create.

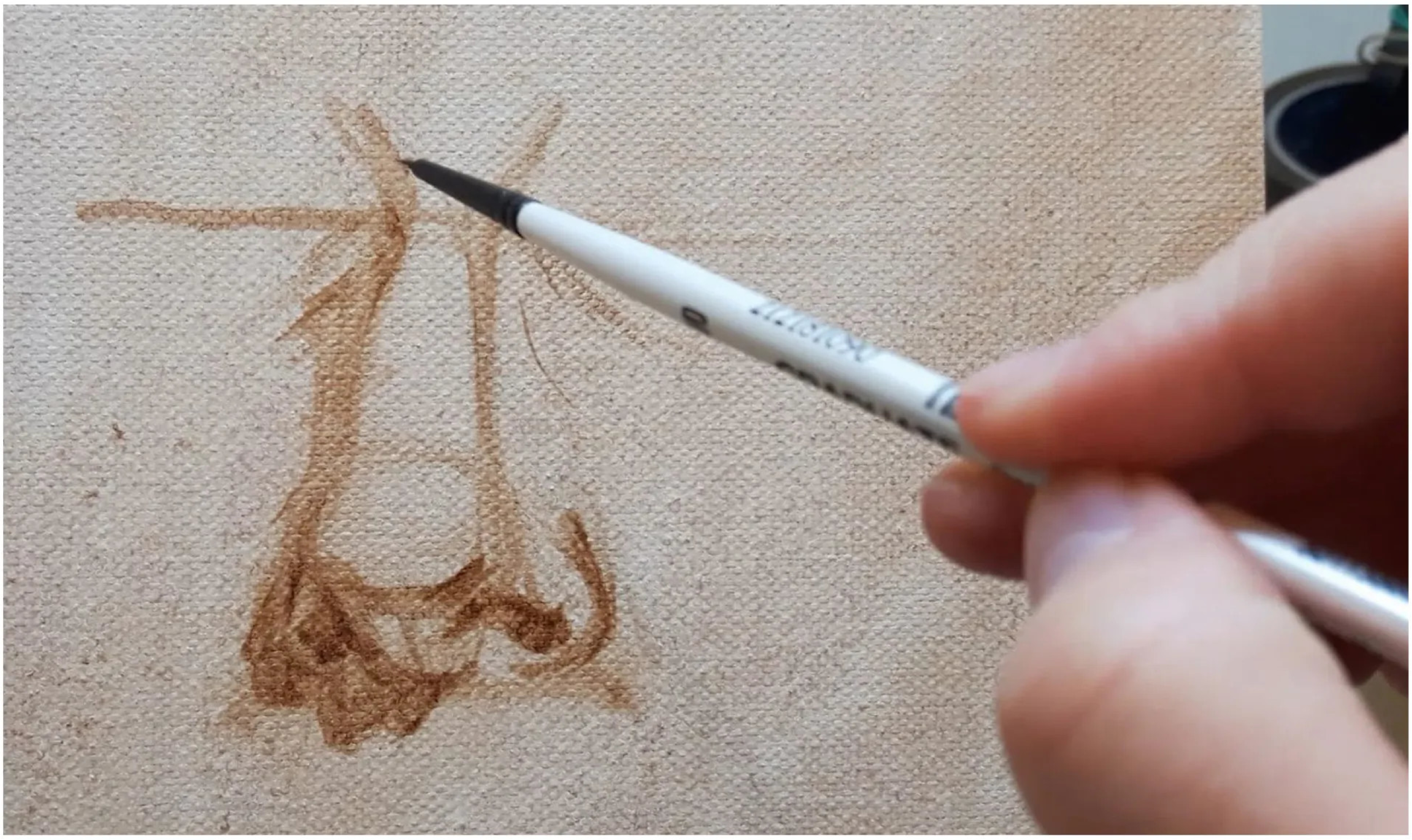
To truly understand how the nose is formed, it's wise to break it down into its basic shapes and to flesh it out from there. Consider how the nose looks in the context of the rest of the face, too. While you may find that you can accurately paint a nose, are you making sure that it is in proportion to the rest of your model's face?



1 Block in the shapes

Start by tinting your canvas with burnt umber thinned with odourless thinner. This will help you judge the values of the painting better. Next, try to establish the very basic anatomical shapes of the nose with a small brush. At this point, don't think about all the intricacies of the shades and highlights. Just focus on basic shapes – triangles, trapezoids and circles.





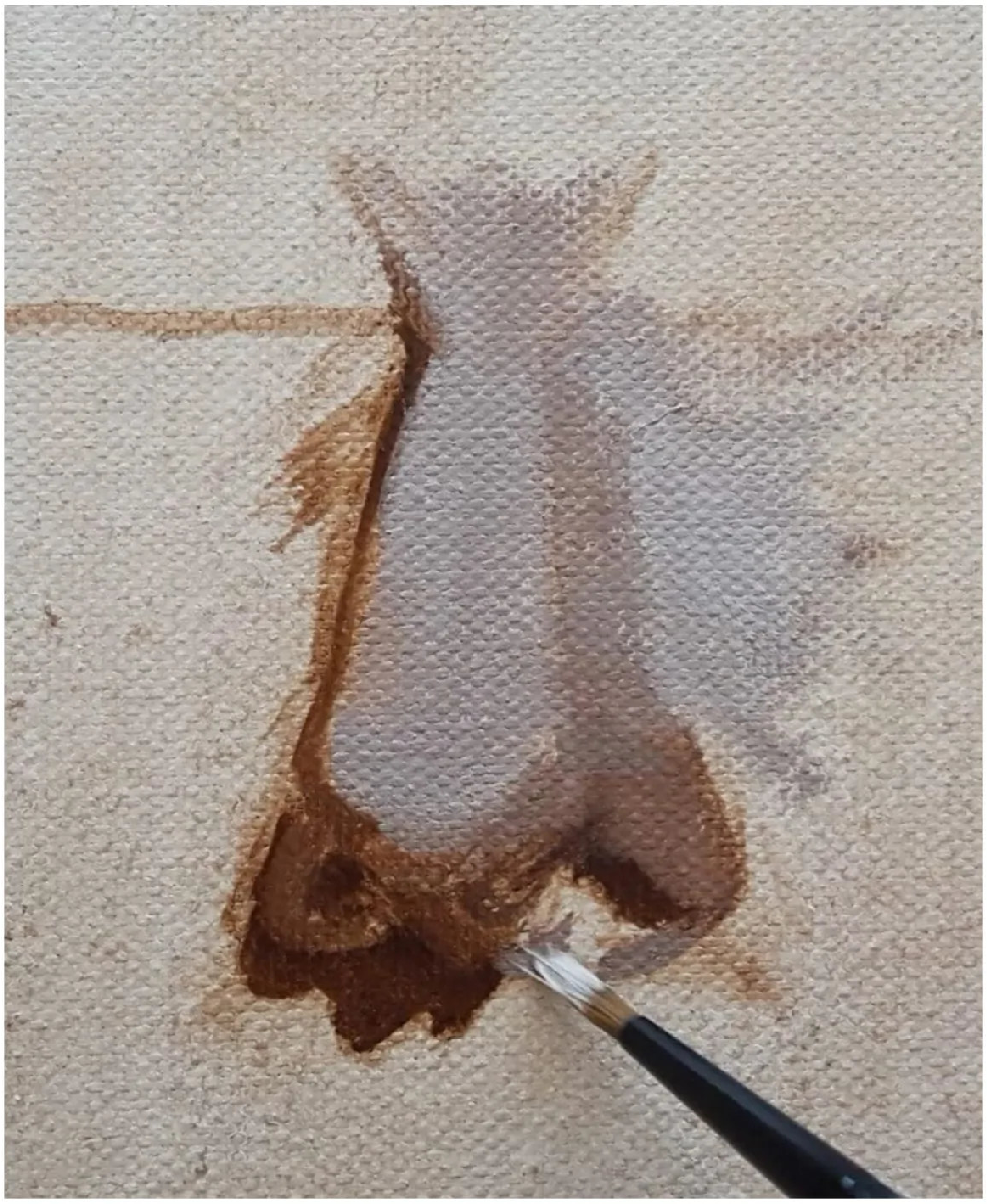
2 Build up the realism

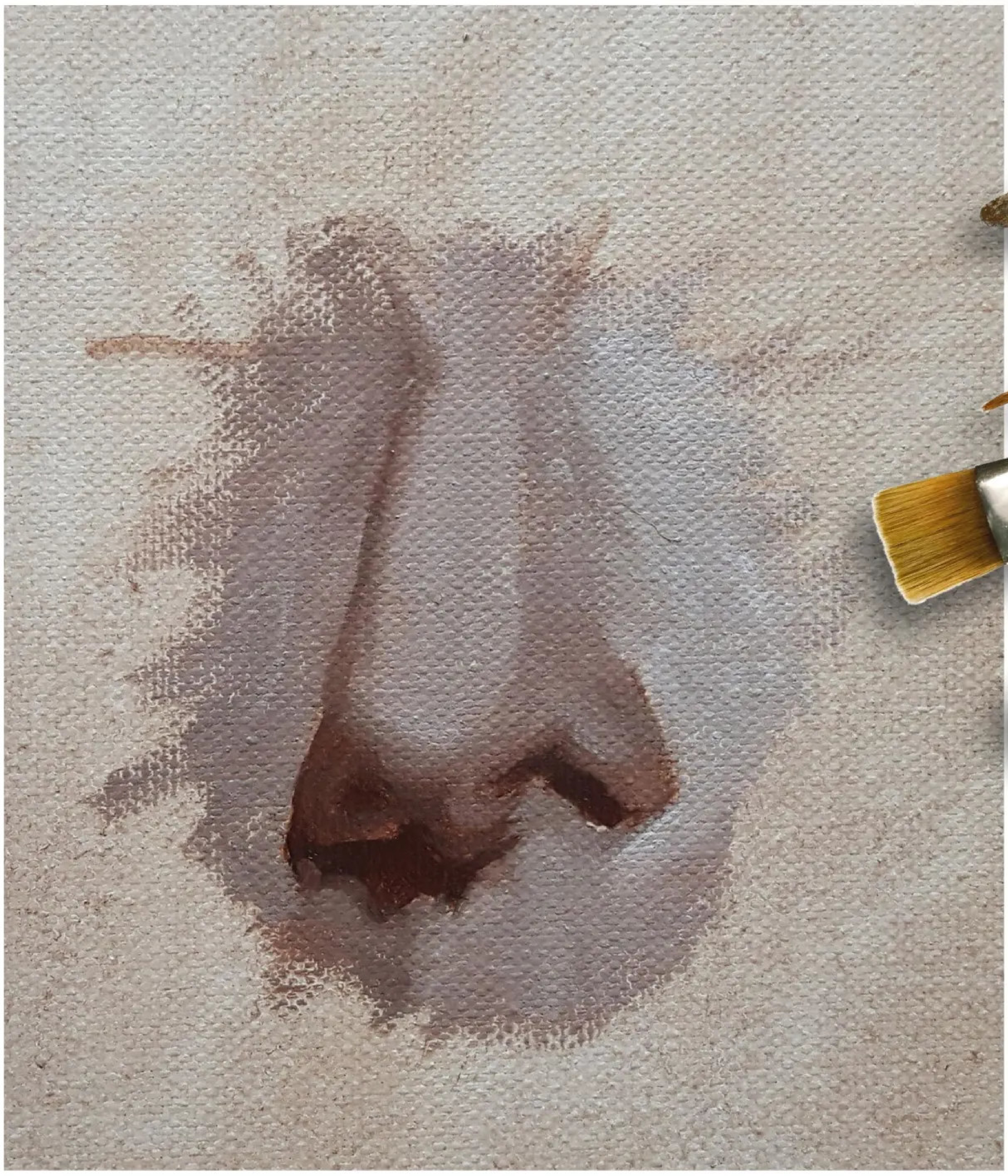
You can now make use of the basic shapes you've sketched and build on top of them. Looking at your reference, sketch in the tip of the nose and nostril wings. Keep in mind that the nose is predominantly made of skin resting upon cartilages or is made of dense connective tissue – therefore it has a very firm structure.

3 Create depth

Block in the main values with titanium white and burnt umber. Try thinking back to the first shapes from step one and observe the direction of the light and placement of the shadows. Again, don't get lost in details. In this step, focus on the basic shapes and values. Remember, however, that the nose openings are not just dark round holes – they have a structure.

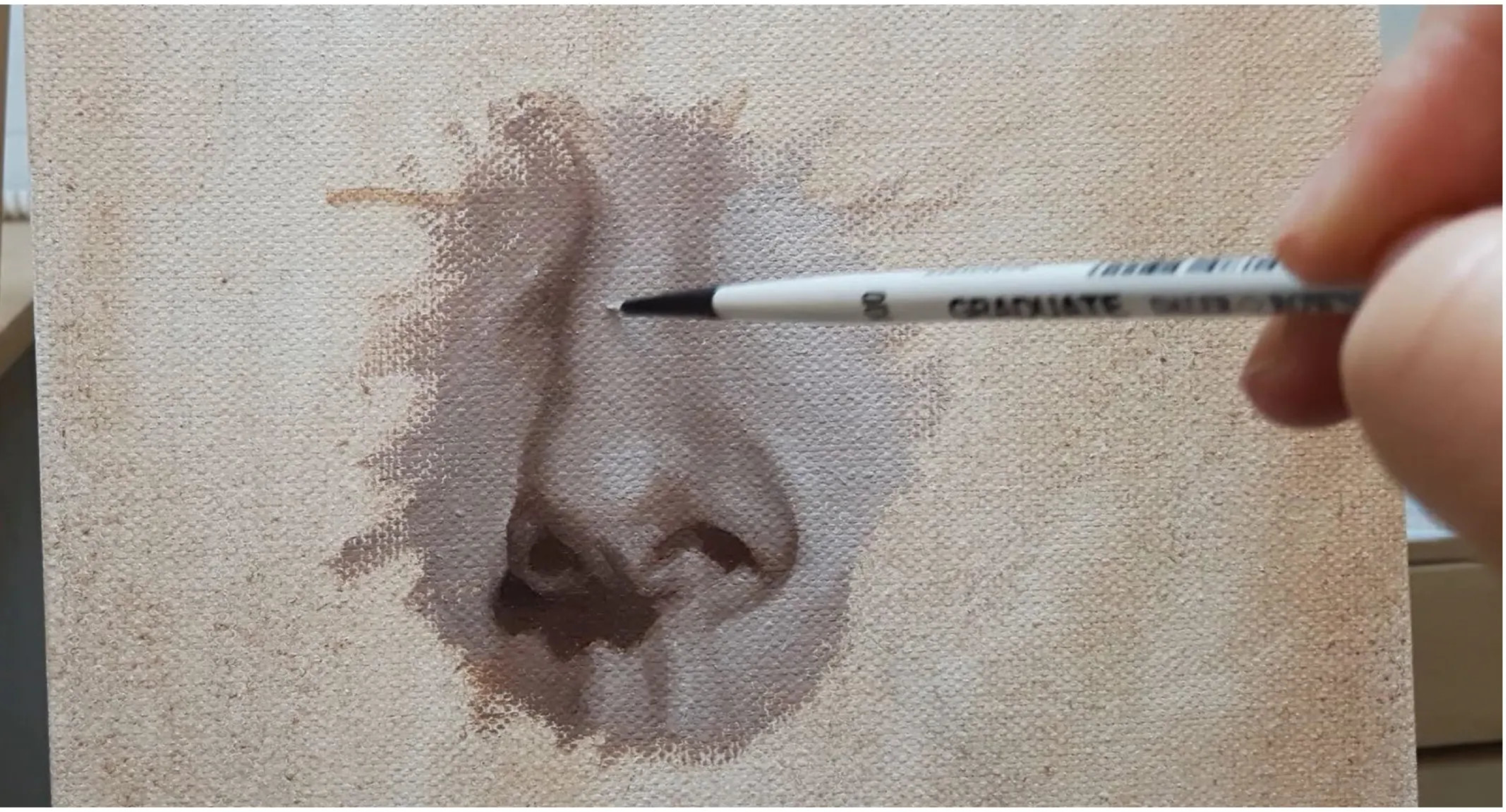
> "Try thinking back to the first shapes from step one and observe the direction of the light and placement of shadows"





4 Add in detail

Once the block-in is done, move on to adding details. Now is a good time to observe all the things you have deliberately omitted. Look at the details that are a part of the nose's shadows, as well as the highlights, and make sure you don't make the nose too perfect. Pay attention to the cartilage below the tip of the nose as this is easily overlooked.



Images: Getty Images (paint daubs, paintbrushes)

Create striking portraits

Cassidy J Alexander demonstrates how to bring expression and liveliness to your portraits

About CASSIDY

Aurora, Illinois, USA

Cassidy has always loved painting portraits and has been a professional for 40 years. Her work is in government, corporate, and private collections across the USA and internationally.

www.cassidyalexander.com

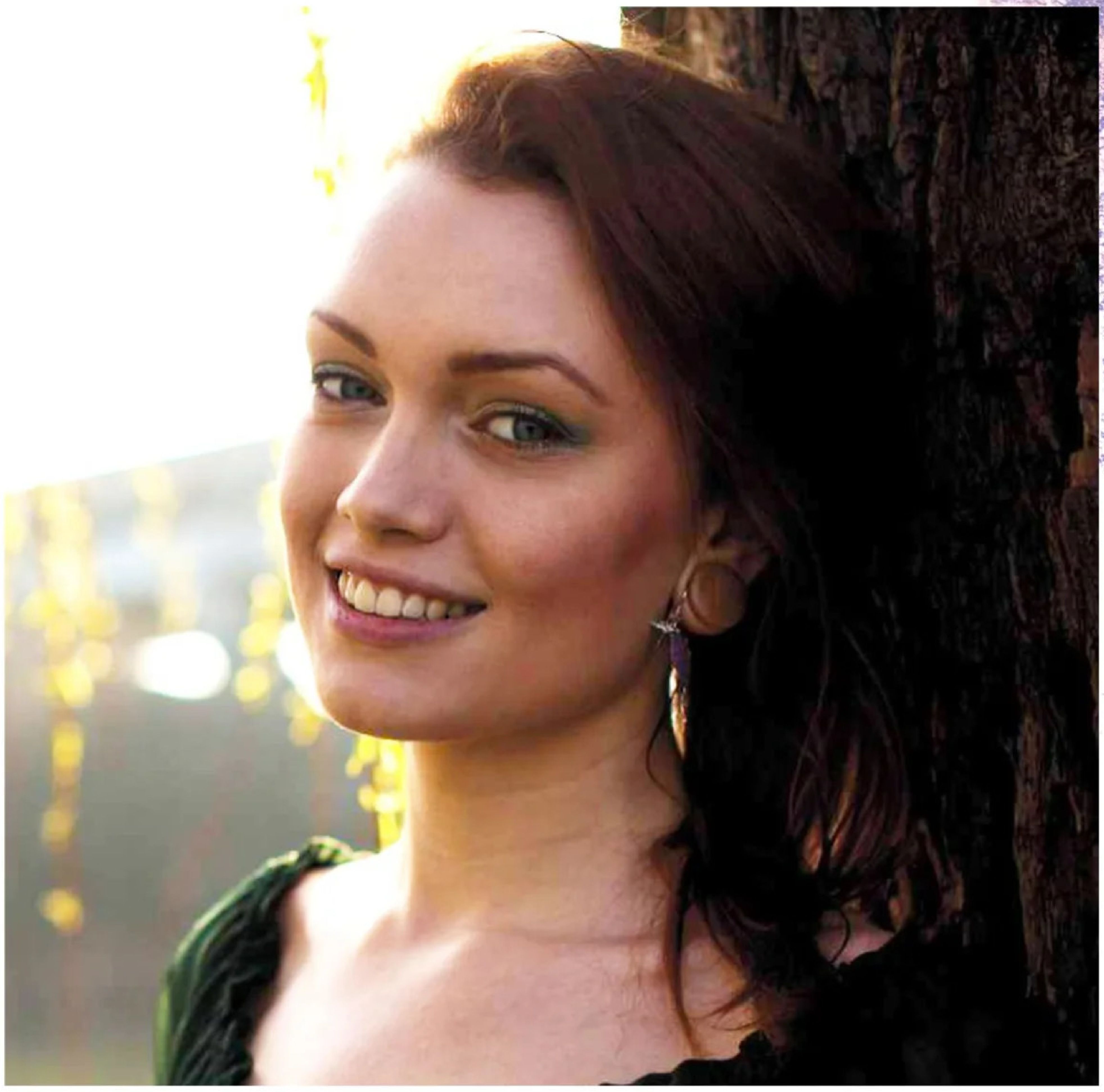
Materials

Although I have collected many more colours than I list here (what artist can resist?), these are the colours I rely on time and again for my portraits:

☐ Stabilo Carb-Othello pastel pencils in earthy reds, browns, greys and black
☐ Nupastels in sandalwood (204), cherry red (213), olive green (248), blue (265), deep terra cotta (273), Van Dyke brown (293), garnet (353), salmon (383)
☐ Rembrandt soft pastels in Permanent Red Light #3, Gold Ochre #3, and all values of burnt & raw umbers, blue-grey, grey-green, Mars violet & Caput Mortuum
☐ Winsor-Newton pastels in Davy's grey, tint 3
☐ Sennelier pastels in medium & light blue-violet (334, 335); dark red (045); deep brown (156)
☐ Assorted paper stompes & tissues; kneaded eraser; soft graphite pencil; banker's clips; Red Devil metal wood sander to sharpen pastel pencils
☐ Tin baking tray and cotton batting cut to fit, for laying out colours for immediate use
☐ 4 ply Bainbridge museum board in Dove Grey, which I clip to a backing board on my easel

Making a painting 'come alive' is always exciting for me, and finding the true expression of a person is my goal. The life in the eyes, the delicate turn of a lip, the arch of an eyebrow – everything affects the expression. Although I studied oil painting privately, I began working with soft pastels on my own, as their soft, blendable texture and immediacy appeals to me. I work with photographs to nail down a pose and expression, but I studied from life extensively. This is important, so that you understand the whole structure of the head and can easily identify where a photo flattens the image and adjust it.

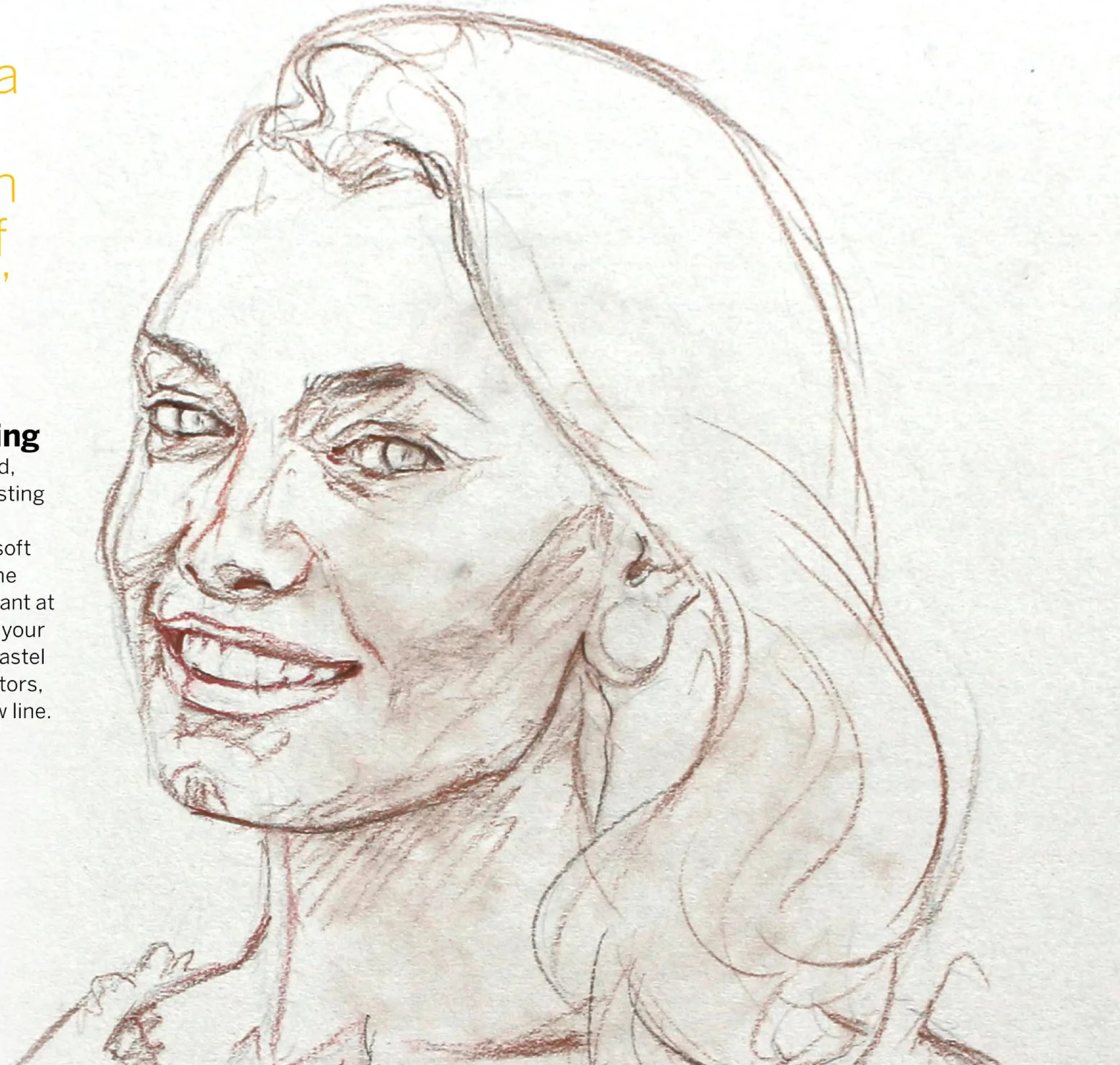
In this workshop, I'll explore how to bring warmth and subtlety to your portraits without needing an extensive array of pastel colours. Skin tones of all types are arguably the most challenging colours to portray, not only varying from person to person but within the same face and form. They are also the most satisfying when you get it right. I'll show you how to lay a foundation for skin tones and layer and blend colours to build up darks and lights from the middle values out. Just as watercolours work from light to dark and oils work from dark to light, pastels are best used from a middle value and then pushed toward more contrast as you develop the painting. These skills apply whether you are creating a still life, landscape or seascape. You may need practise getting just the right touch for layering; too heavy and you'll destroy what's underneath. Go easy! You can always add another layer. I'll also help you to balance cool and warm colours for a more lifelike and pleasing portrait.



> "Choose a photograph with a good, natural expression and an interesting play of light and shadow"

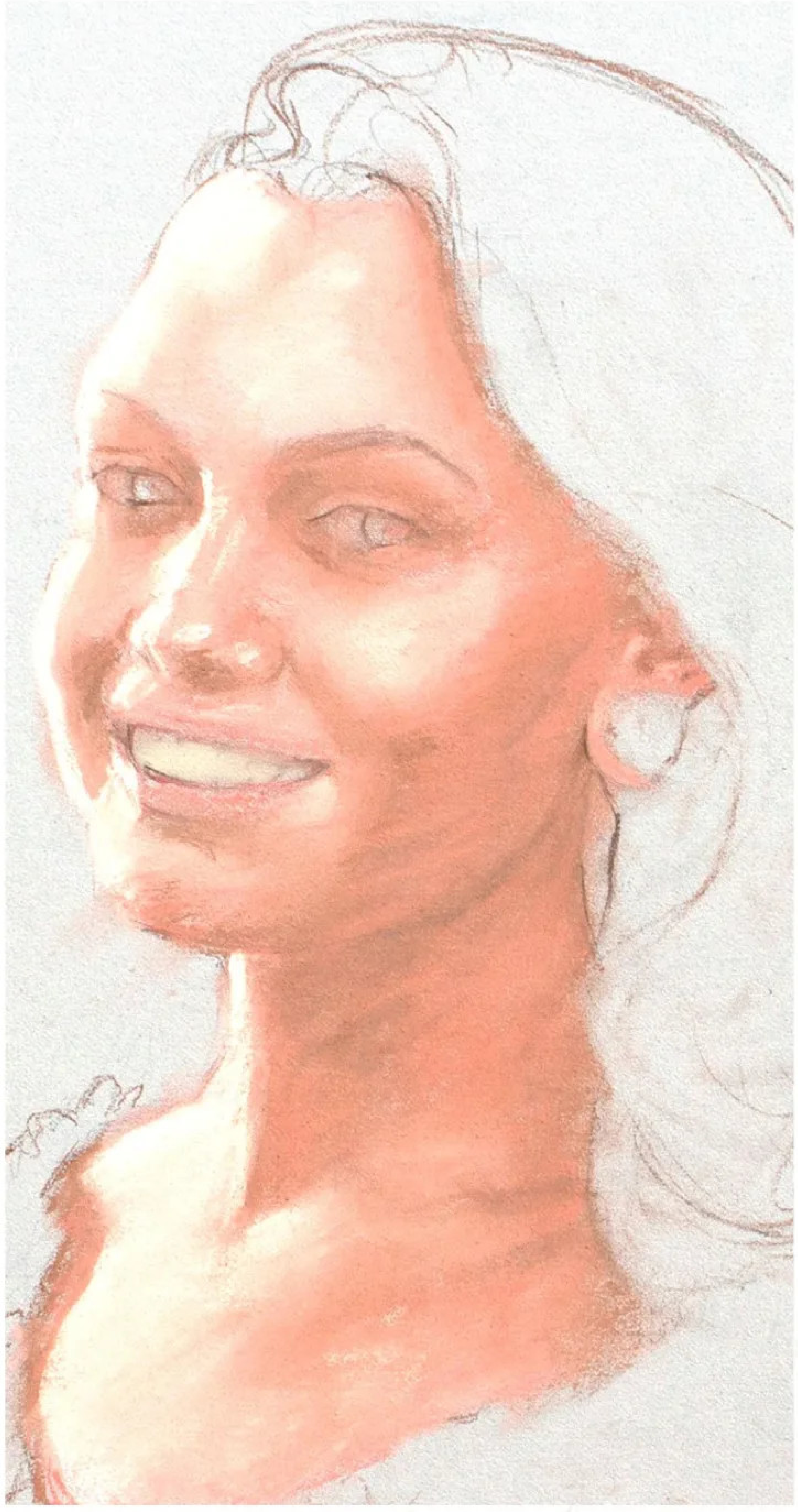
1 Establish the drawing

Choose a photograph with a good, natural expression and an interesting play of light and shadow. Carefully make a drawing of the face, neck and hair using a soft graphite pencil in light strokes, including the shape of the cast shadows. Erase all you want at this stage. When you are satisfied, go over your lines with a medium brown or terra cotta pastel pencil, using heavier strokes for key indicators, such as mouth line, bottom of nose and jaw line.



Tip it!

When working from a photograph with a tilted head, move your painting so that the eyeline (through each inner corner) is a perfect horizontal. Adjust the photo to match. This lets you see the angles of the face and neck with the most accurate judgment.

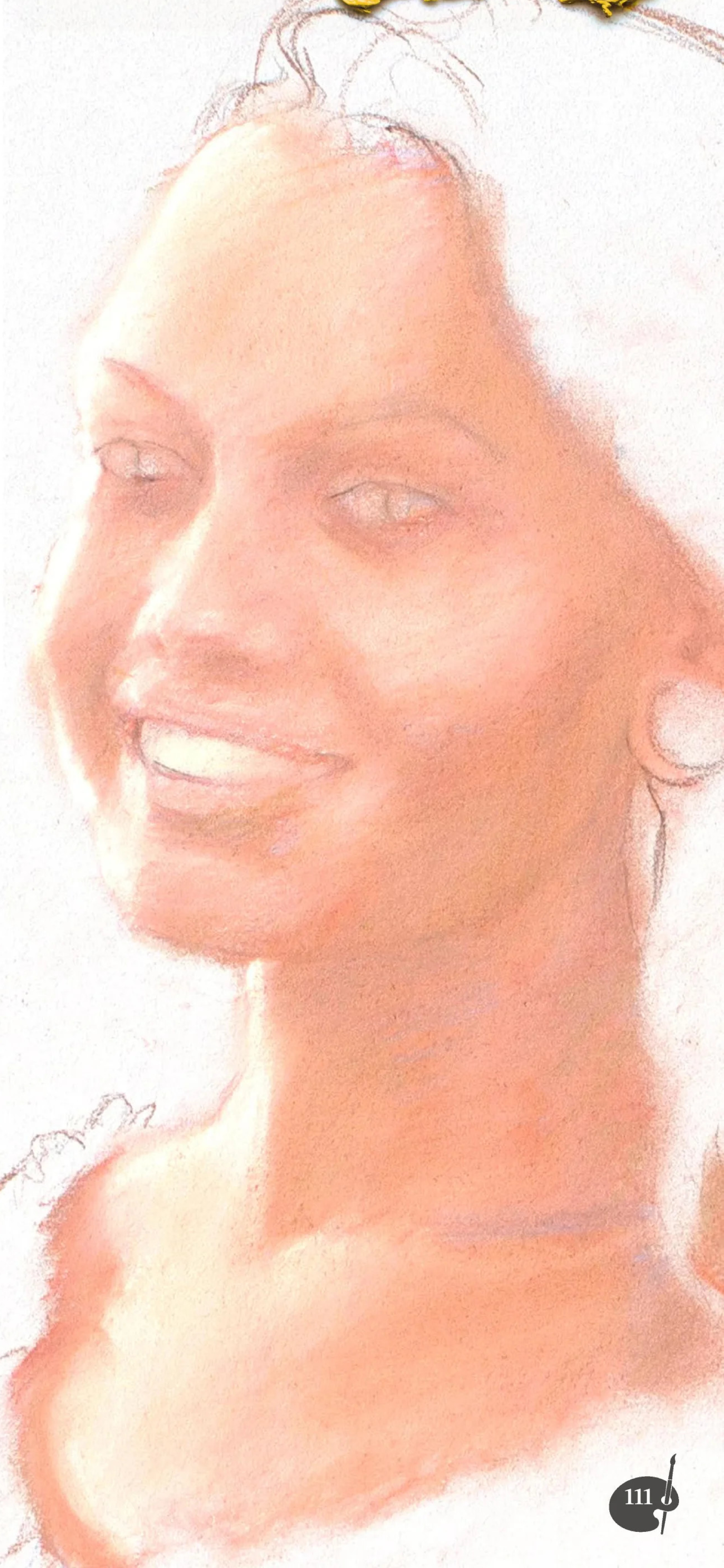


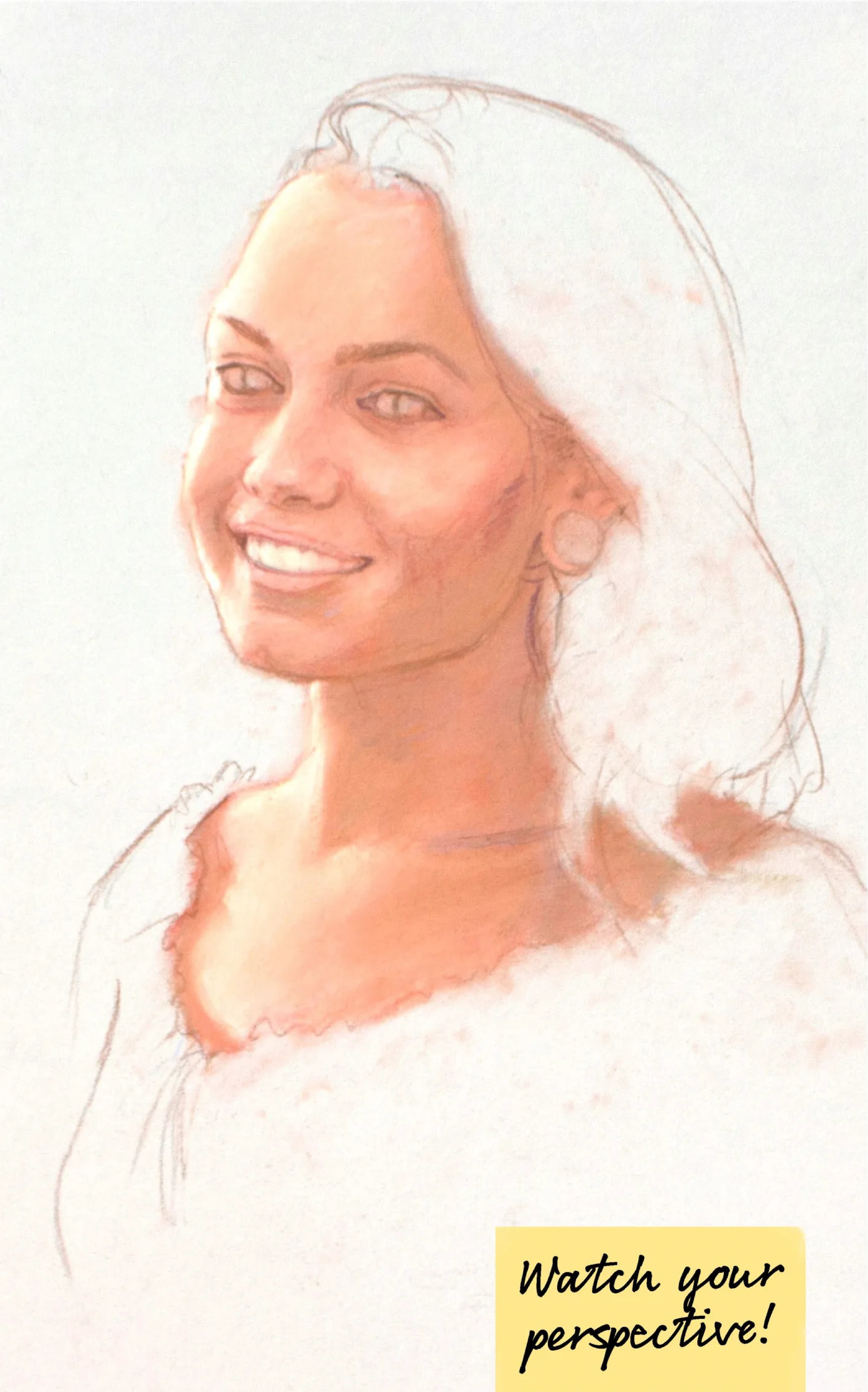
2 ▲ Lay in base skin tones

Fill the light parts of the face with an overall tone (in this case, sandalwood), adding the lightest burnt number to suggest lighter areas, and fill in shadows with a salmon colour and medium brown. Blend the colours with your fingers or a tissue, making sure to keep the shadows separate. This establishes a raw face upon which to build colour. Fill in the teeth with a light raw number in a blurred mass.

3 ▶ Build colour layers

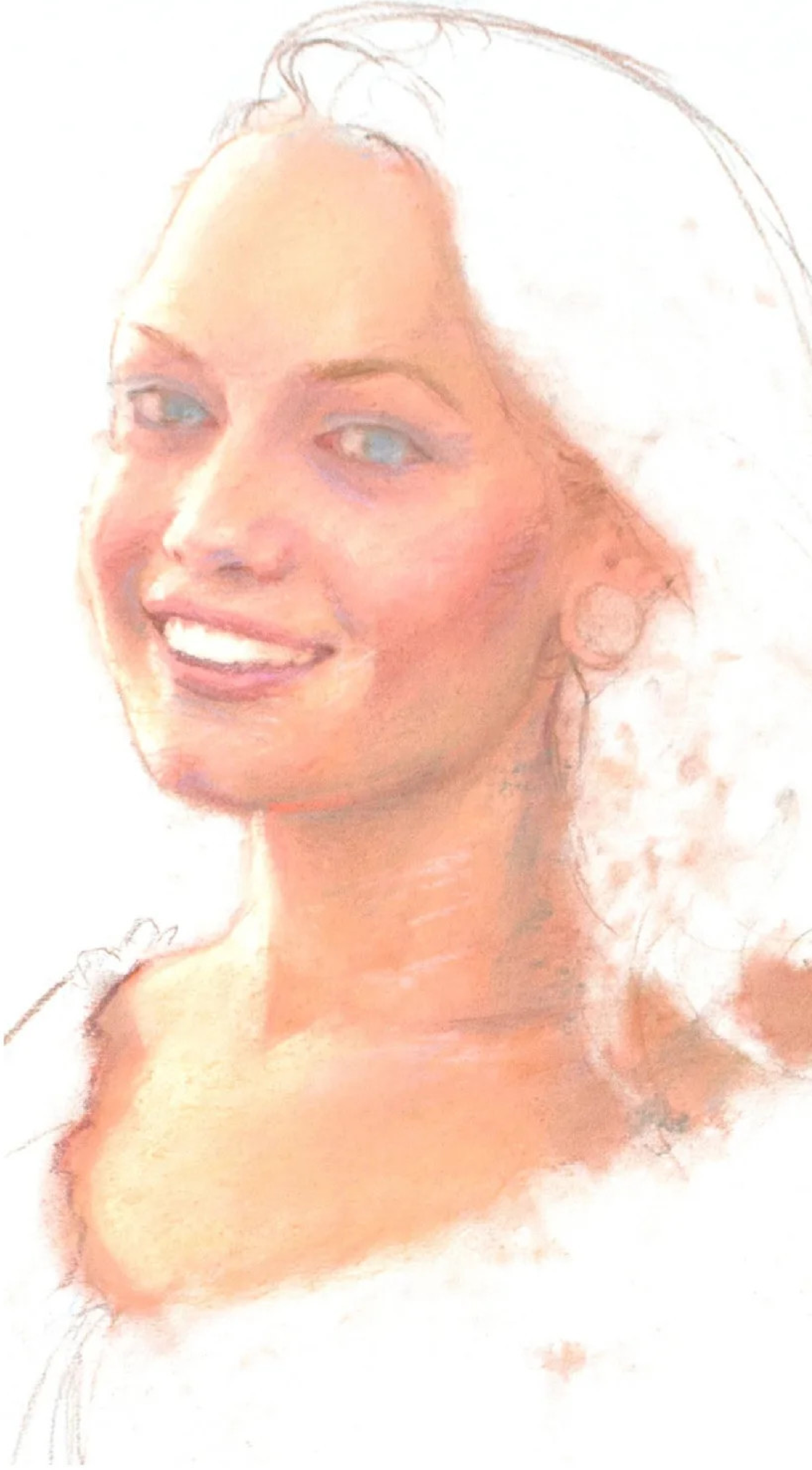
Adding blues and greens will avoid a plastic look, but we need a stronger red to support them. Softly stroke a light-red pastel over the whole of the face using a very easy touch in the light areas and more force in the midtones and shadows. Now gently stroke olive green and, in turn, clear blue Nupastels over the whole face, a layer at a time, in the same subtle way. Blend the colour layers together, being very careful to respect the lights, midtones and shadows.





4 ◀ Redraw and refine

Carefully find the lines of the drawing again. Use a terra cotta red pastel pencil to outline the nostrils' wings, lips and gums. Redraw the inside corners of the eyes, the eyelid folds and smile lines. Now draw in the eyes, eyebrows, nostrils and jaw line with a dark brown or burgundy pastel pencil.

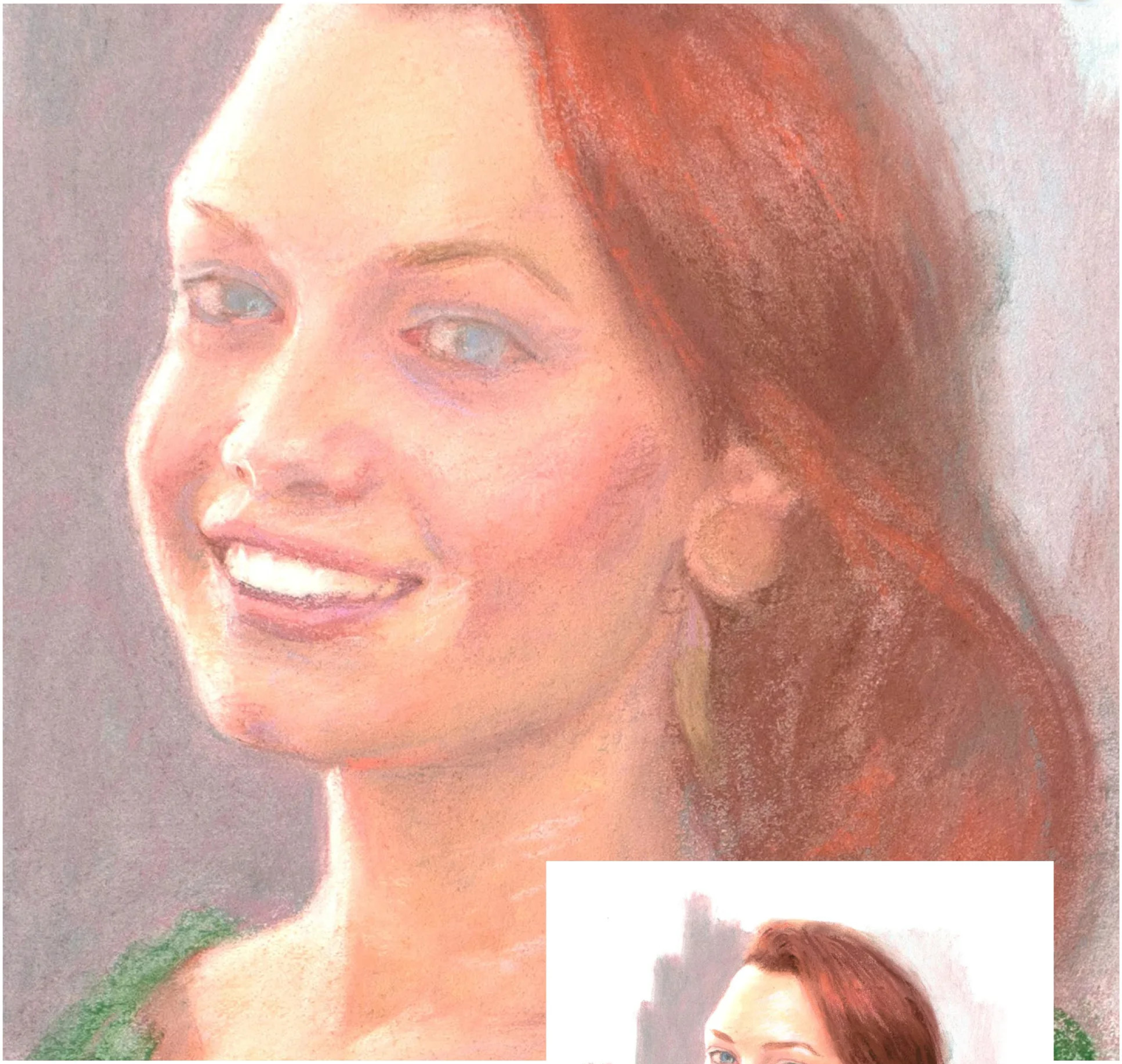


5 ▲ Find warm and cool colours

Carefully find the lines of the drawing again. Use a terra cotta red pastel pencil to outline the nostrils' wings, lips and gums. Redraw the inside corners of the eyes, the eyelid folds and smile lines. Now draw in the eyes, eyebrows, nostrils and jaw line with a dark brown or burgundy pastel pencil.

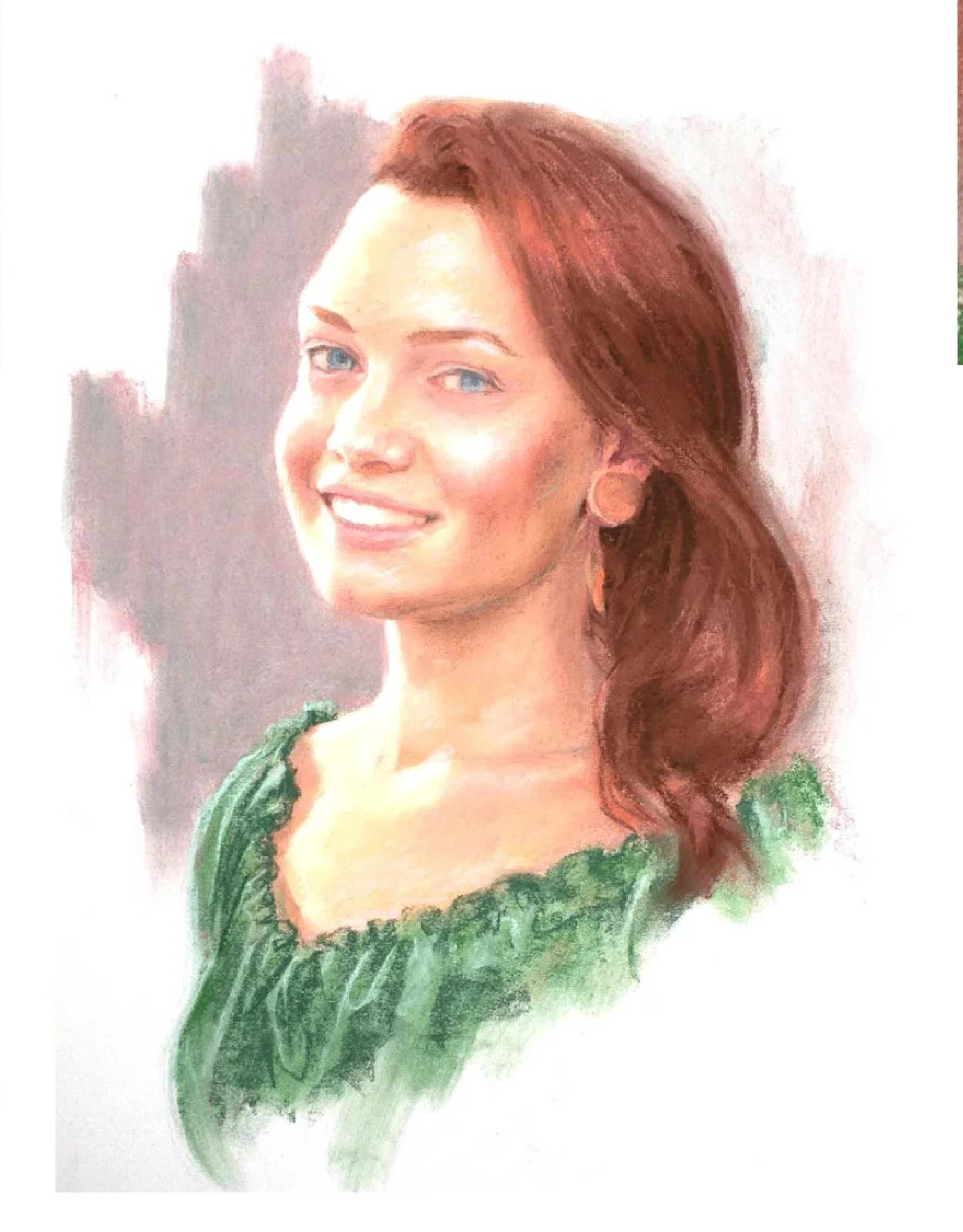
Watch your perspective!

When drawing a face in ¾ view, remember that every feature of that face is also in ¾ view. The far eye, especially, will not show its far corner; instead, it is a nearly vertical line, like the small arc of a circle.



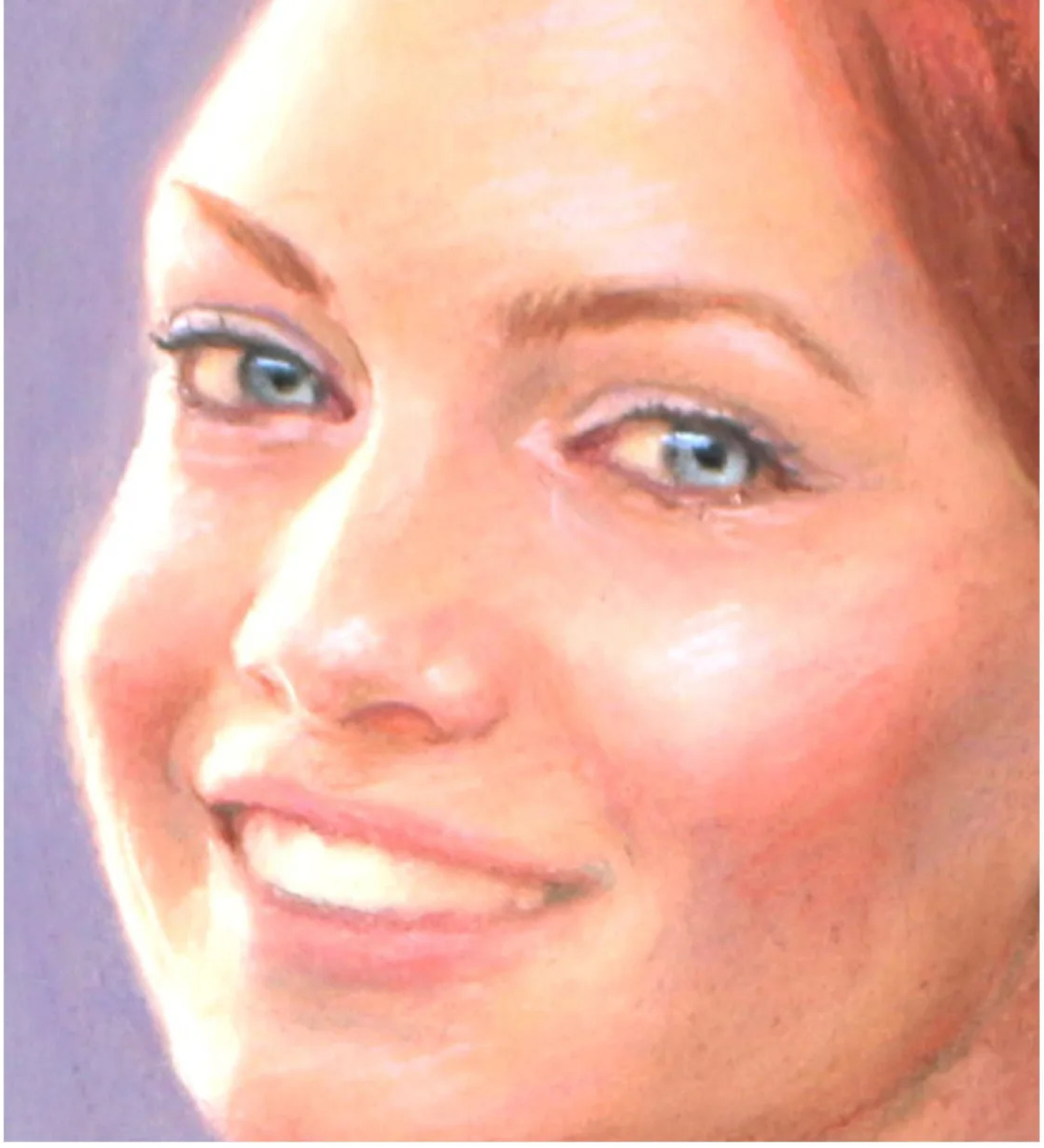
6 Block and unify

Laying in the rest of the painting will help us see the whole light/dark composition before we go into detail. Add the base colour of the hair, clothes and background. This is a time to balance tones and values. Decide if you want the background to contrast with the model or to blend in. Harmonise and unify the painting by adding some of their colours into each other.



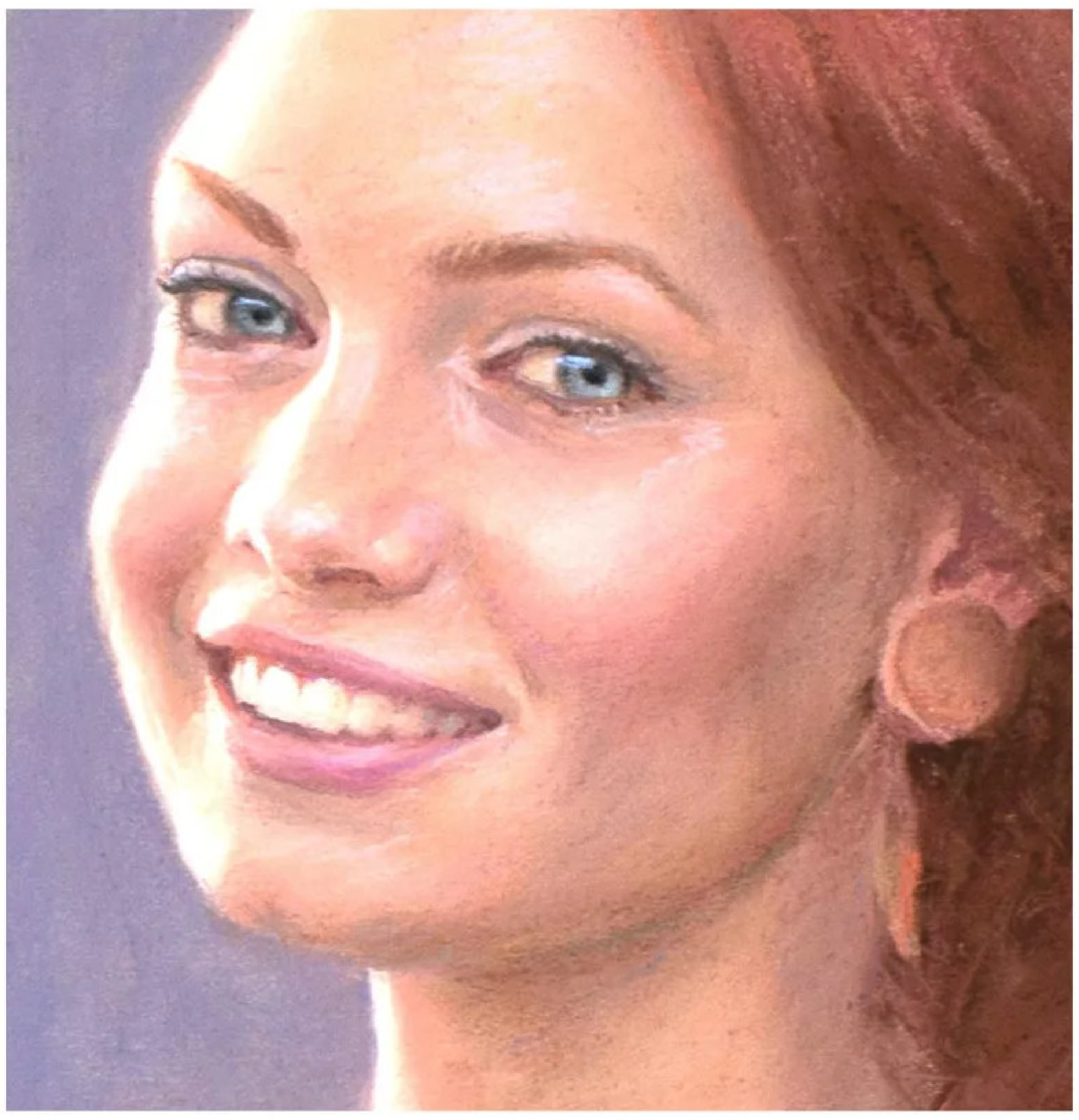
7 Push light and shadows

Time to correct the contrast again. Heighten the lights in the skin tones and darken the shadows where needed, being careful to keep the midtones in place. Define the nostrils and the planes of the nose. Don't forget the hair and clothes. Keep in mind where the light source is and make certain that every feature obeys the same light and shadow direction.



8 Define the eyes

Refine the eyelid folds with a darker pastel pencil. Keep the whites a medium value – on the shadow side they are barely lighter than the iris. Make the pupils very dark and outline the iris softly with a dark charcoal. Find a few eyelashes – but not many and not evenly – and adjust the smile in the eyes. Show a few hairs in the eyebrows with soft strokes of lighter colour. Darken the inner corner with a deeper red and lighten the skin around it. Add highlights of pale blue violet to the eyes.

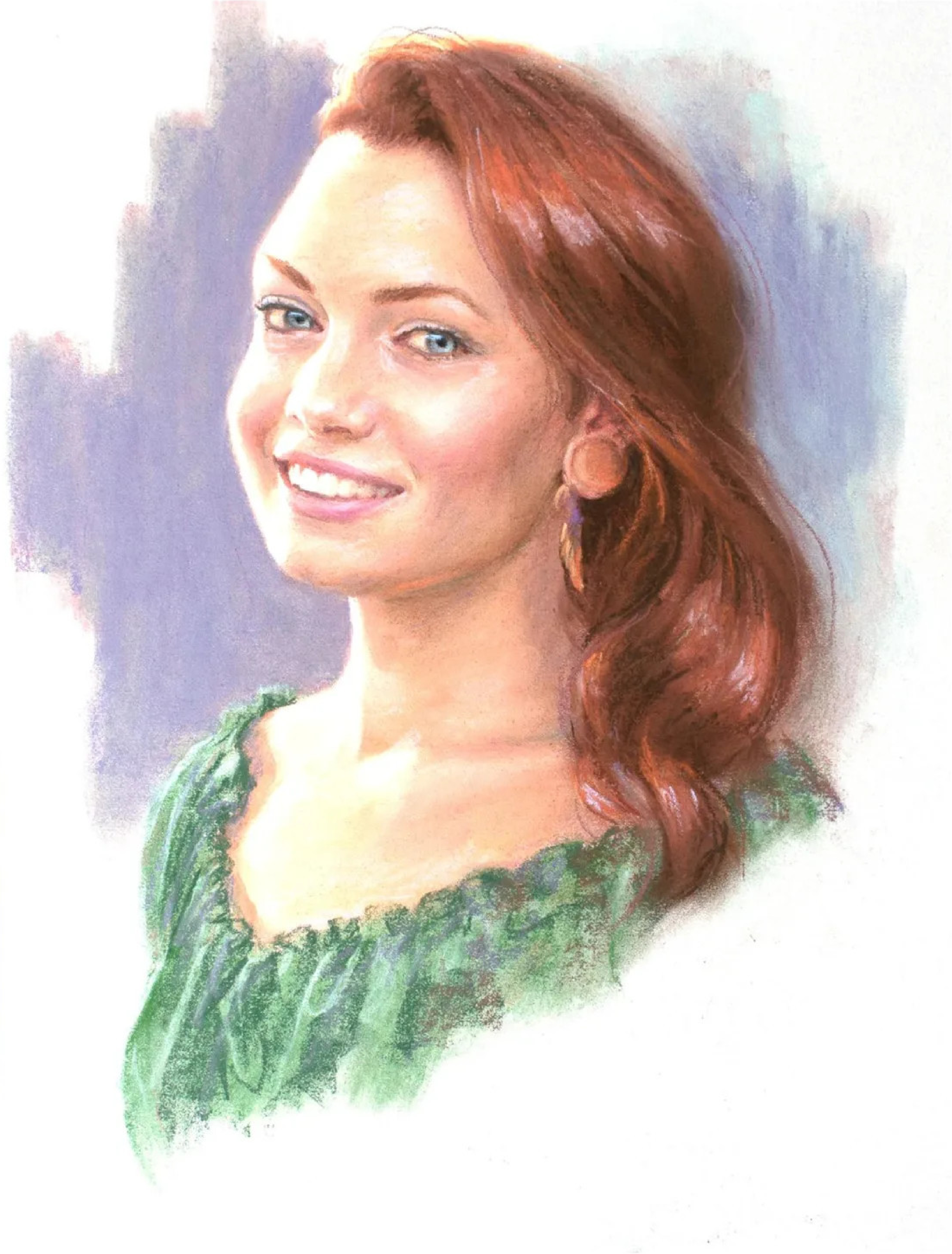


9 Define the mouth and teeth

The lips and teeth need to be handled carefully, as this is often where expression is lost. Define the tops of the teeth where they meet the gums and the bottom of the teeth if they do not touch the bottom lip, but don't divide the teeth with lines, as this will look like a gap. Shade the teeth where the mouth curves back for more dimension. Adjust the curves of the lips and darken the corners of the mouth. Be cautious with smile lines: too dark and you will have a marionette!

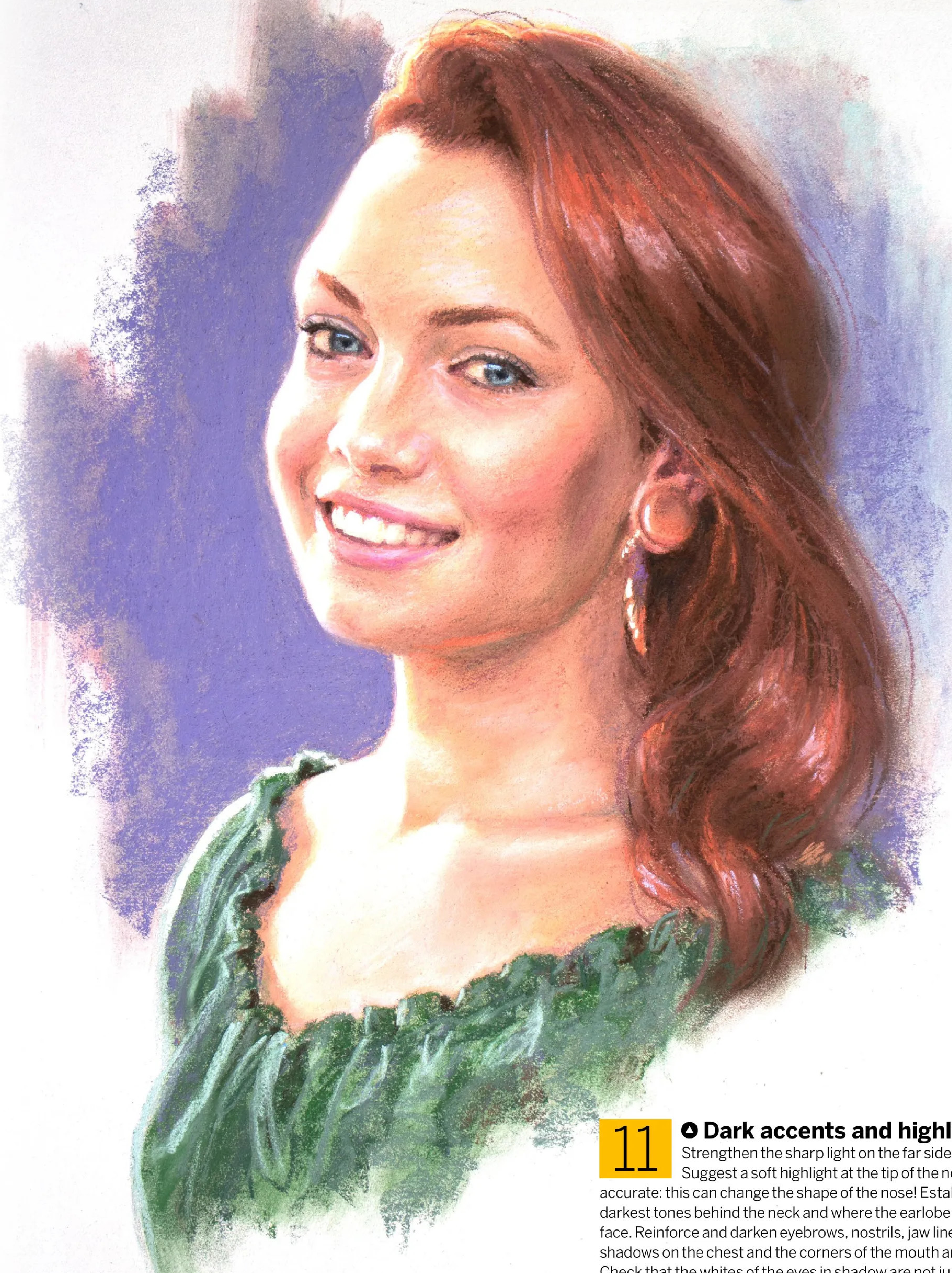
10 Detail the hair

Adjust the lights and darks of the hair and add some strokes to suggest individual hairs. Softly blend in the hairline for a natural look. Have some blurred as well as sharp edges on the outside of the hair mass. Add strong colours where the Sun hits and a blue-grey or violet highlight just underneath. Develop medium tones in the shadow side to give dimension. Find a few loose hairs at the edges.



A mirror image

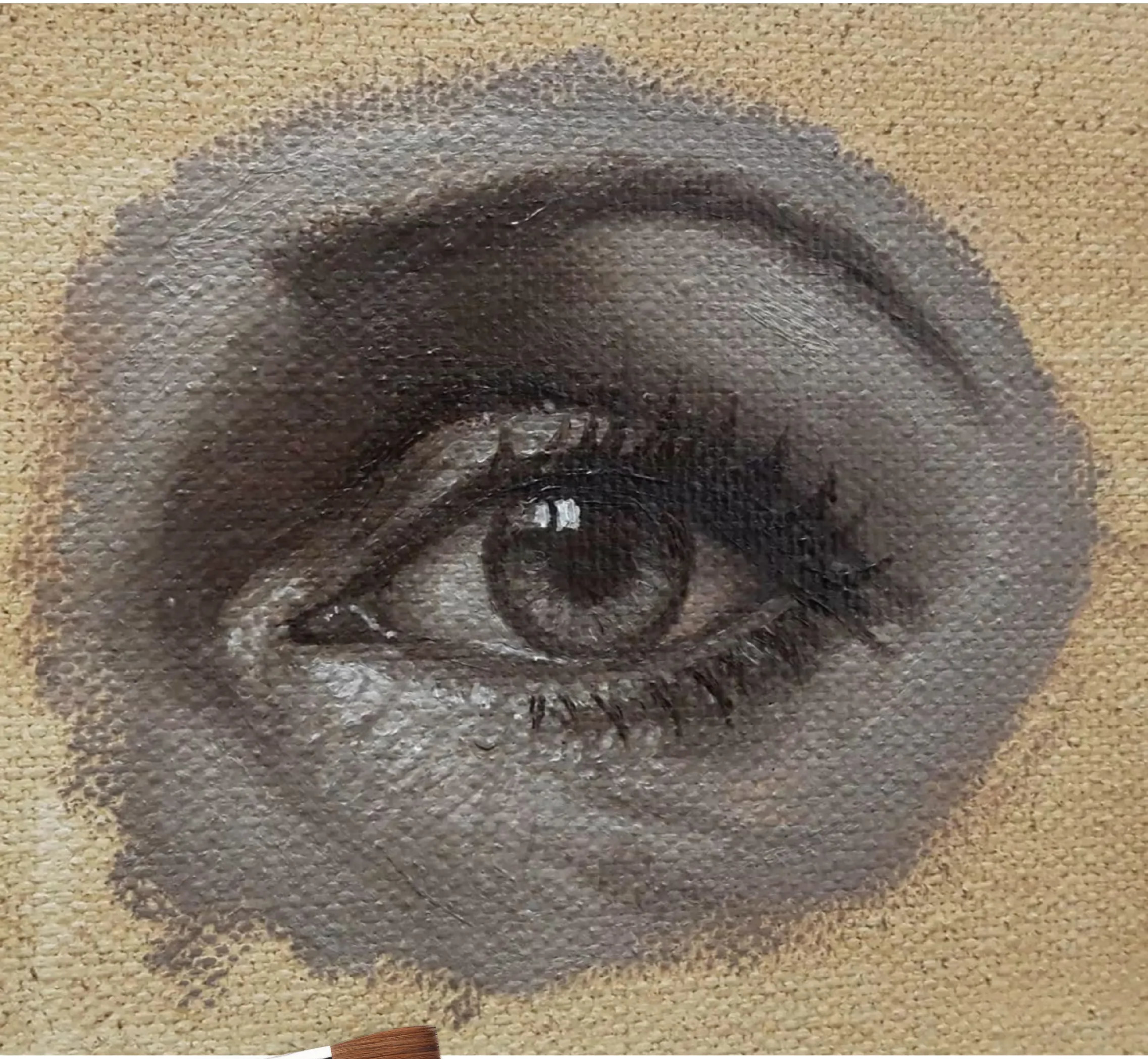
It's good to get a fresh vantage point often to check the accuracy of your drawing. Put the source photo next to your painting and look at both in a mirror. Your mistakes will jump right out!



11 Dark accents and highlights

Strengthen the sharp light on the far side of the face. Suggest a soft highlight at the tip of the nose. Be accurate: this can change the shape of the nose! Establish the darkest tones behind the neck and where the earlobe touches the face. Reinforce and darken eyebrows, nostrils, jaw line, the cast shadows on the chest and the corners of the mouth and eyes. Check that the whites of the eyes in shadow are not jumping out, as this will change the direction the model is looking. Find some folds in the blouse and softly vignette. Put very dark red accents in the corners of the mouth. Make bright, swift highlights on the earring. You're done!

Photographs taken by Lorenzo Losurdo



> “Creating an emotive portrait is more than just accurately depicting the anatomy of the eye, however – it’s capturing the expression of a face here that will really ground your portraits in reality”

How to paint realistic eyes

With their intricate details, the eyes hold the key to achieving photorealism. **Kate Oleska** teaches how to get them right

About **KATE**
Kent, UK
Kate is a digital and traditional artist working in oils and charcoal. She has illustrated numerous books for various international publishers, including 14 books for Terry Pratchett's 'Discworld' series.
www.kateoleska.com

Eyes are the most important element of any successful portrait.

To help you get them right, I will explain what to do in order to achieve a realistic effect. I'll teach you about the importance of judging values and observing the anatomy of the eyes so that your portraits can come alive.

For many, the eyes are considered the window to the soul – so to truly capture the essence of a person in your portraits, it's absolutely vital to get the eyes right.

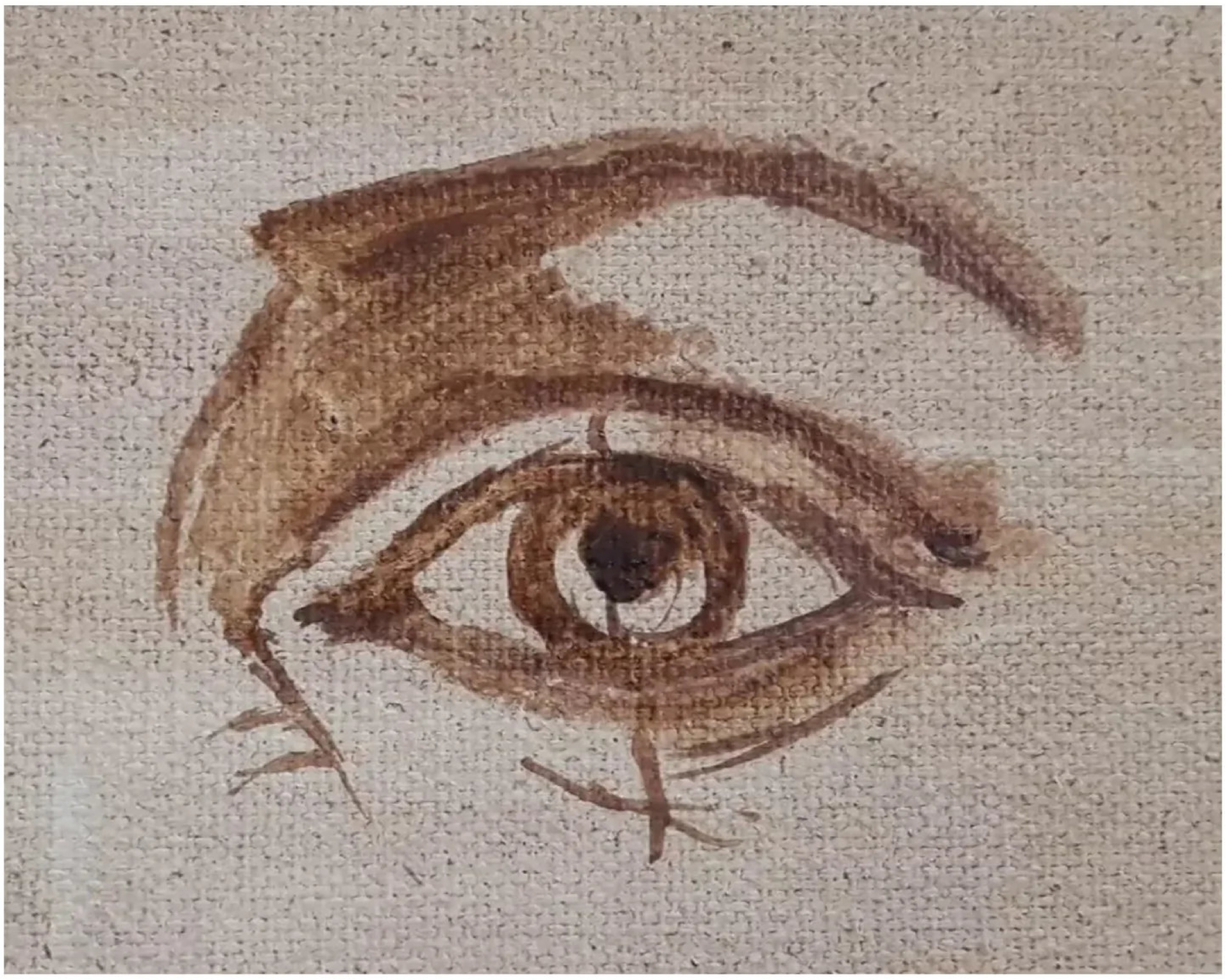
Creating an emotive portrait is more than just accurately depicting the anatomy of the eye, however – it's capturing the expression of a face here that will really ground your portraits in reality. Head back to page 28 to find out how the eyes – as well as the rest of the face – changes depending on a person's expression. It's these little considerations that can make or break your work.

1 ◀ Tint the canvas

Although it may not seem important, it is crucial to avoid working on a white canvas. I recommend tinting the canvas with a wash that is a mixture of thinner and any oil paint (in this case, burnt umber). This is to help you judge values more efficiently. It also eliminates the natural fear of putting the first brushstroke onto a clean surface.

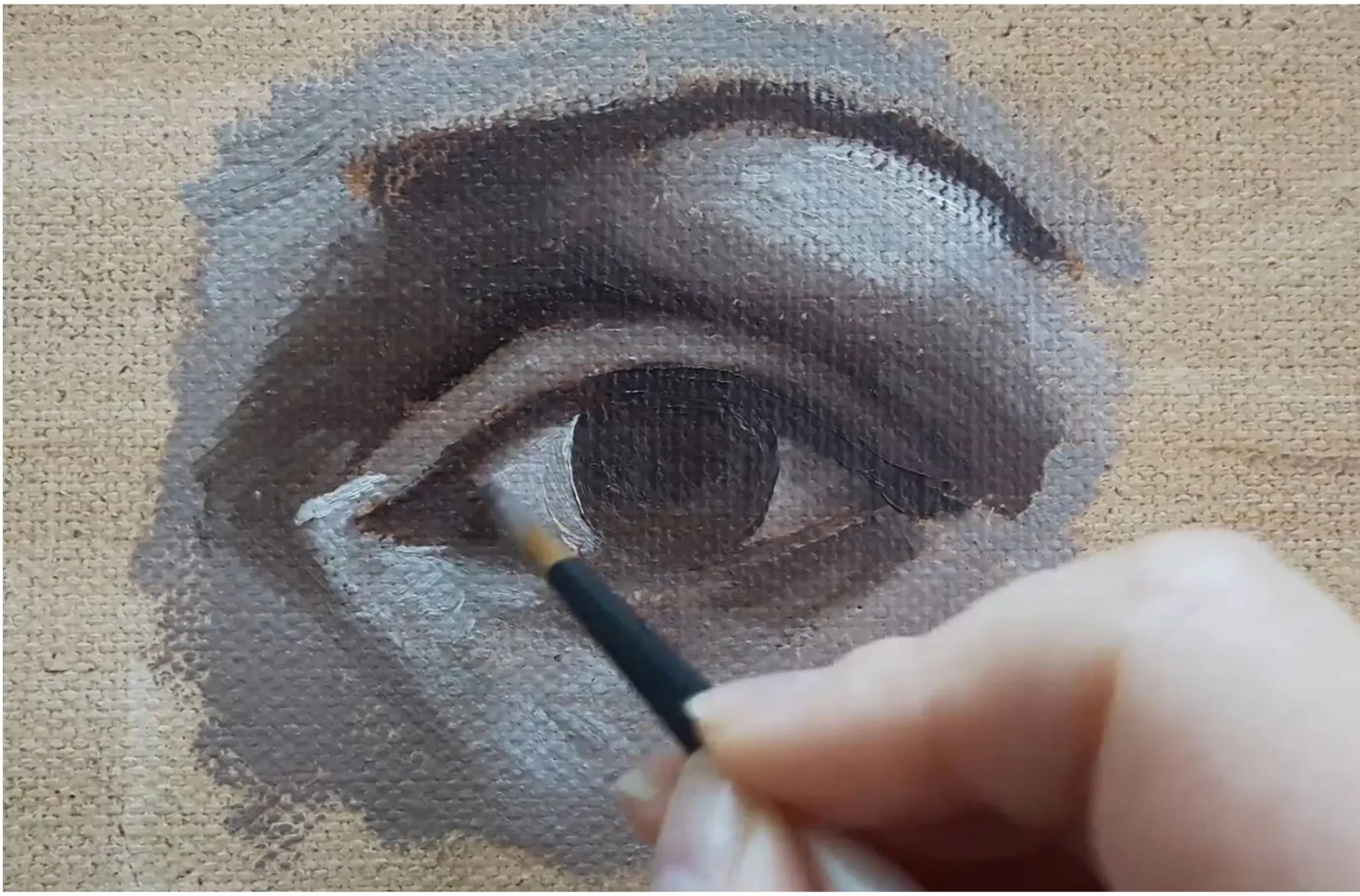
2 Basic sketch

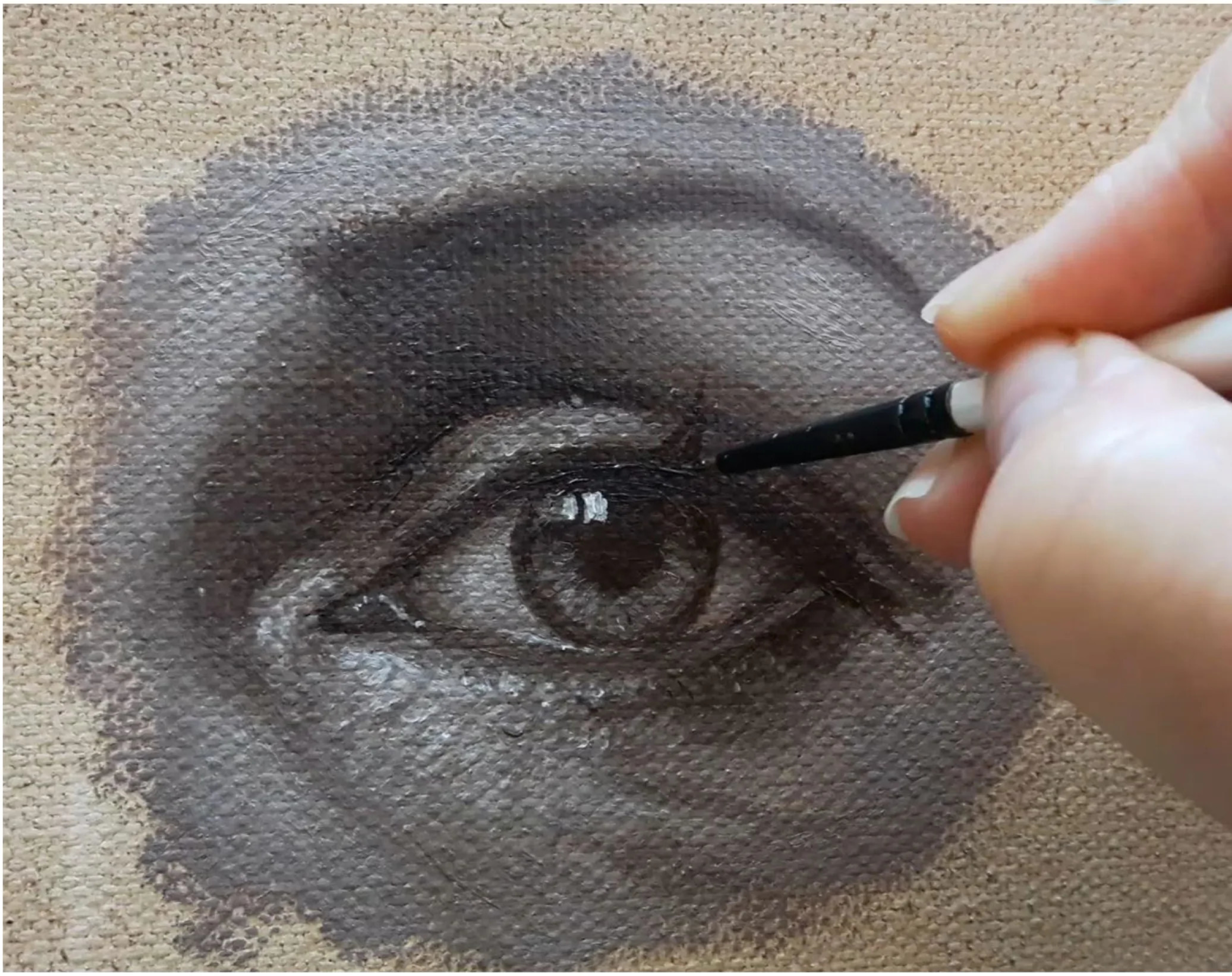
Establishing an anatomically correct sketch is very important. Every eye is different and looks different from different angles. Keep in mind that the eye is a round ball with an iris, covered with a cornea shaped like a dome. The eyelids have thickness as well and they will form shadows on the white and iris of the eye.



3 Find the tone

To block in first colours or/and values, you need to try to look past the details that will always try to grab your attention. Squint your eyes and block in similar adjacent colours and values in one go. Don't worry, this is only a base for the details that will come later. Pay no attention to eyelashes and wrinkles.

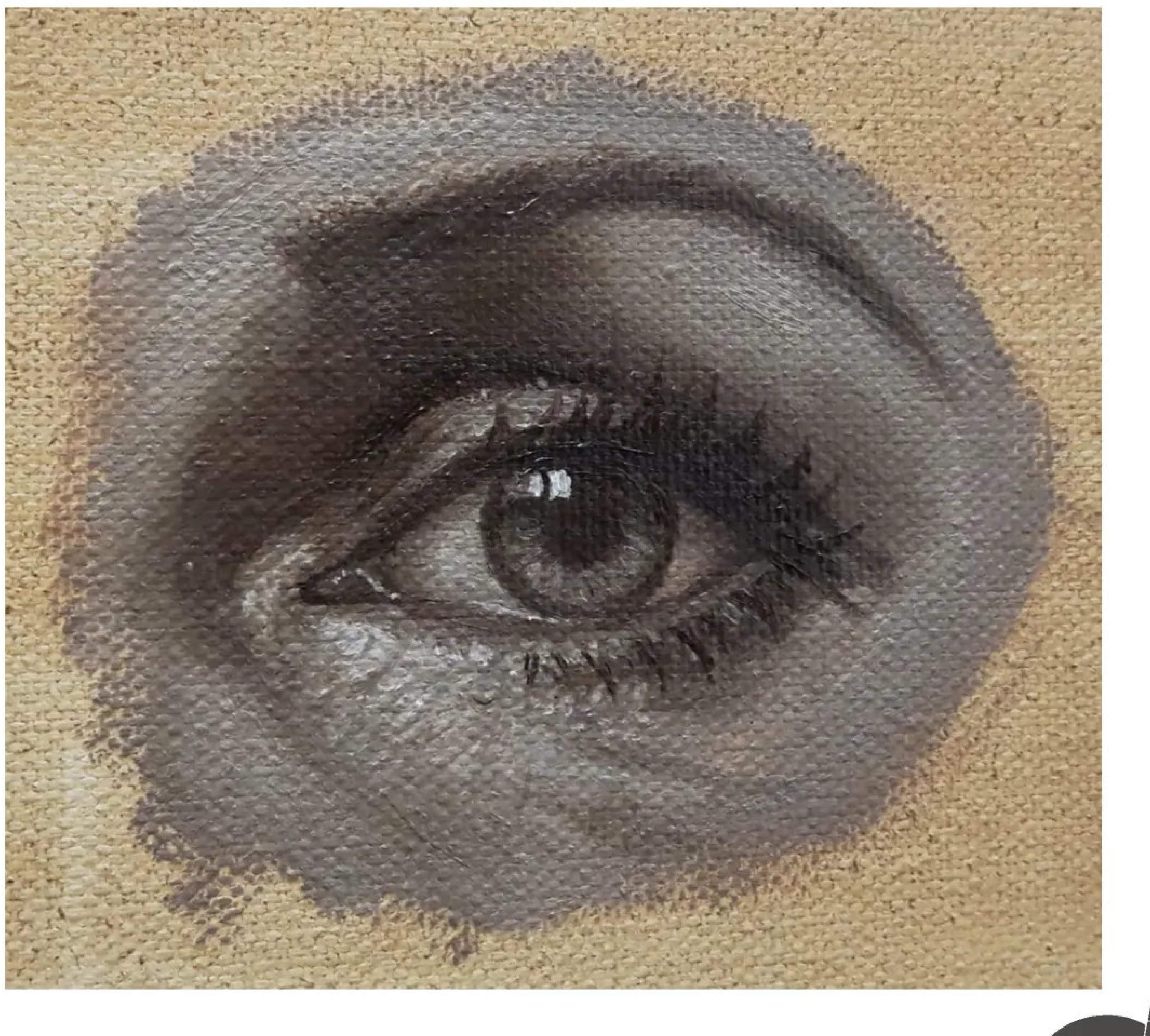




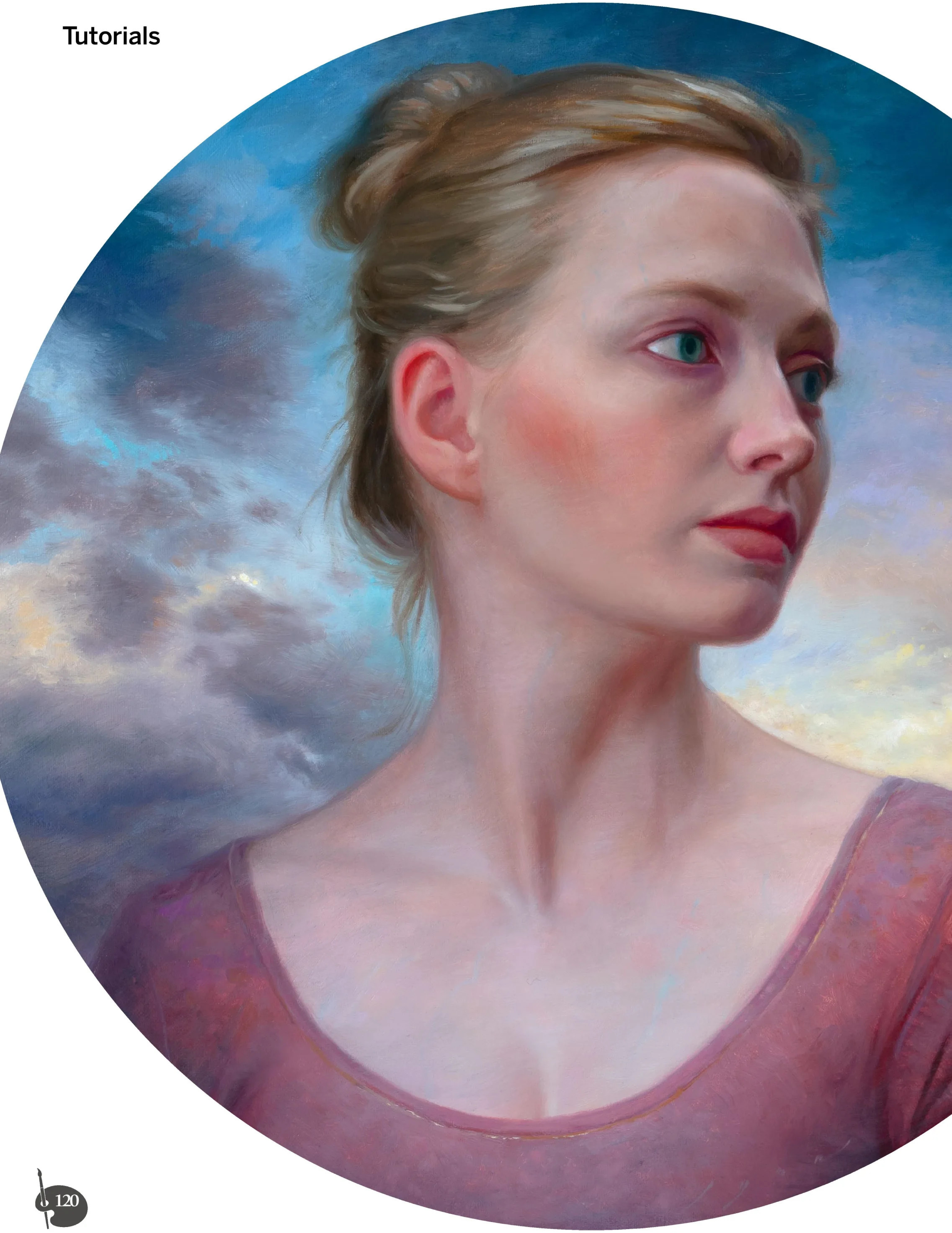
4

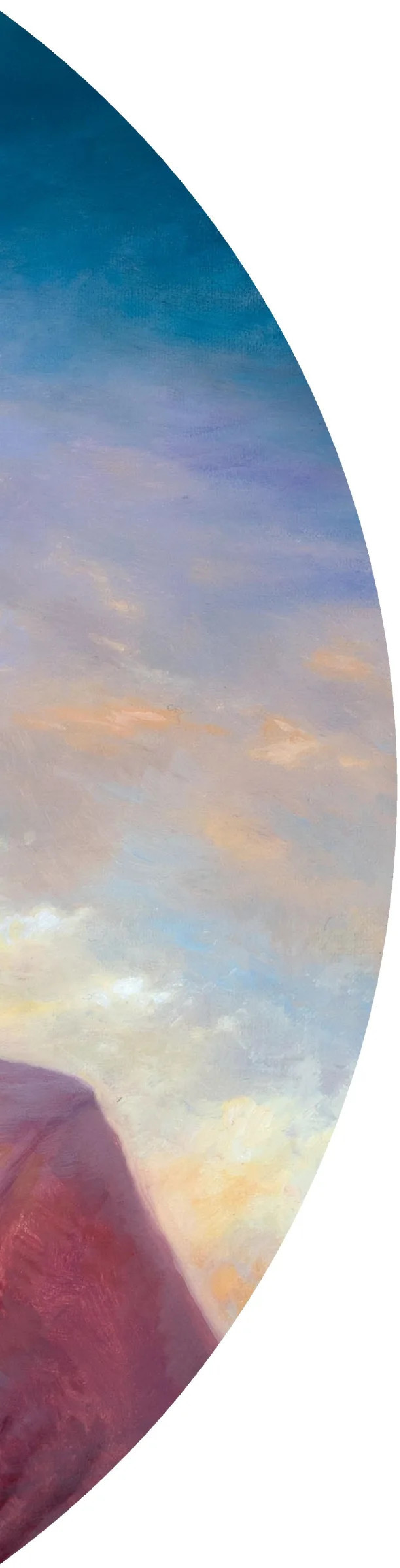
▲ Add in details

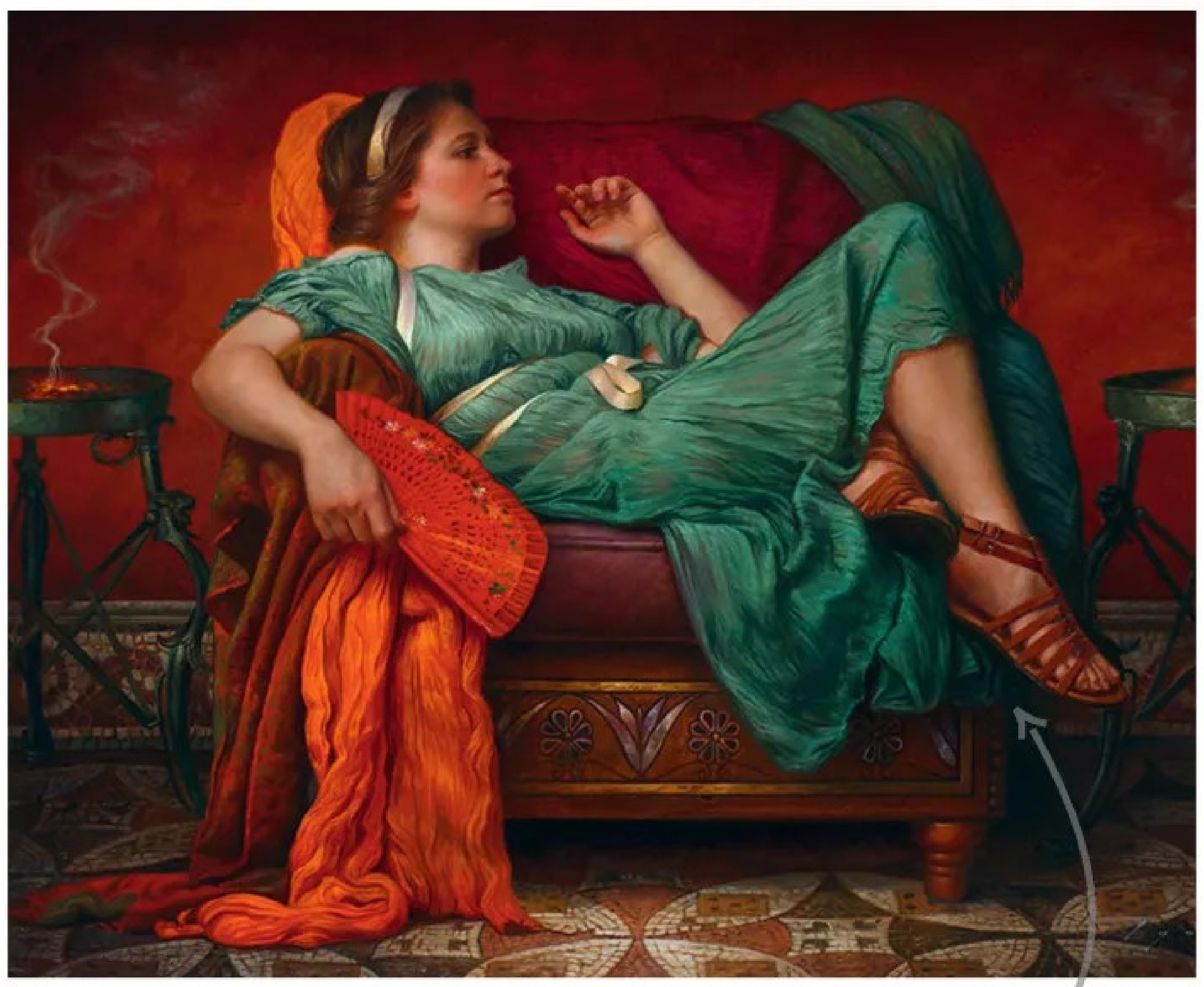
Now is the time to start adding details. If you blocked in the base colours properly, you will now only need to worry about refining details and adding paint where it will make a difference. Adjust shapes and apply textures. Don't overdo it though. It is easy to forget yourself and render too much. Paint only what you see and not what you think should be there.



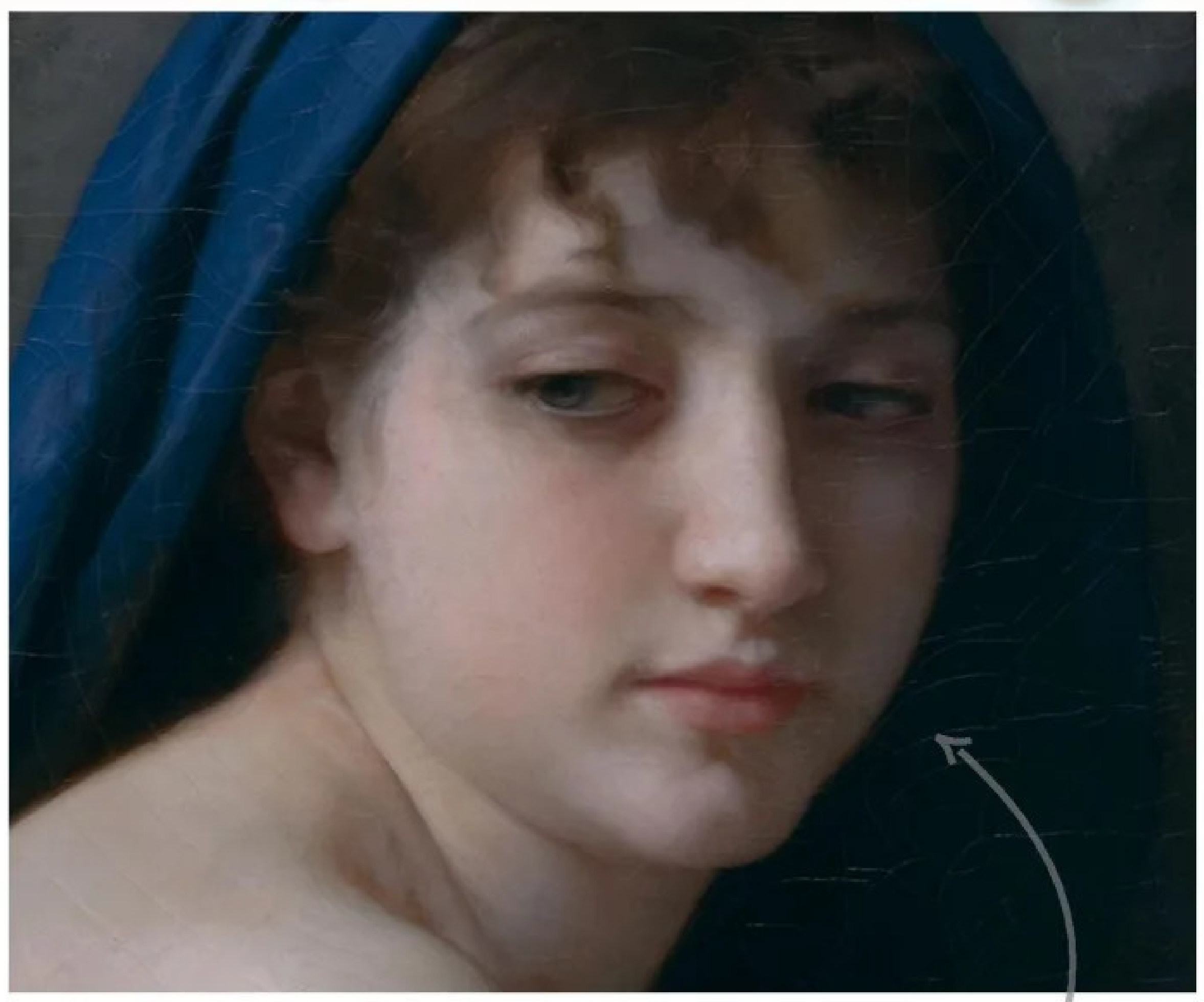
Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)







Howard's After the Dance acknowledges the work and achievements of 19th-century artists



Detail from Bouguereau's Seated Nude, which inspired Howard to refine his approach for painting skin

Paint a classically inspired portrait

Howard Lyon describes his process of creating a portrait in oils with symbolic meaning, using an academic approach

My workshop is all about creating a portrait with meaning. It's also about my idea for a series that dealt with the decline of academic principles and beauty in art.

It started with a painting titled *After the Dance*, done in 2017. The 'dance' referred to the amazing period of artistic creation at the end of the 19th century, when Sargent, Bouguereau, Waterhouse and Leighton were all at the top of their game. The 20th century saw some incredible innovations and diversity in art, but for me didn't offer as much beauty or skill as the 19th century. I wanted to express my passion for the principles espoused by the artists I love and apply it to a series.

I created another work titled *Observing the Past*, which depicts a woman looking to the left with small embers floating past her. The embers are the principles and ideas of the past being consumed by progress. I knew that I wanted to create a companion piece of the same figure looking to the right and trying to discern the future. She would be hopeful and some small shifts in the palette and pose would hopefully generate a sense of contrast with the first painting.

We don't know what kind of art will be created in our future, but I do see a trend towards beauty, craft and skill that wasn't sustainable through the middle of the last century. I started the series by looking at the artists I admire and picking out qualities I wanted to capture. I've been collecting books over my career that I turn to regularly. It is important to surround yourself with inspiration.

I like to start the day going through photos I've taken of inspiring paintings or browsing my books. I have always been drawn to William-Adolphe Bouguereau and in this case the face of the woman in his painting *Seated Nude* stood out as something I wanted to study further. I love the subtlety in the way Bouguereau painted flesh. The palette of this painting is designed to complement the way the skin is painted. As you look to develop your own paintings, identify the images that inspire you and try to break them down into the elements that are most important.

About **HOWARD**
American Fork, Utah, USA
Howard paints for various galleries, clients and collectors. Recently he's worked on Magic: The Gathering Cards and Brandon Sanderson's 'Mistborn' and 'The Way of Kings' series.
www.howardlyon.com

GOLDEN
GAC 100

H535
FOUNDATION UMBER
SF
Holbein
EXTRA FINE ARTISTS' OIL COLOR
(3.7 fl.oz.)

1 Prepare the linen

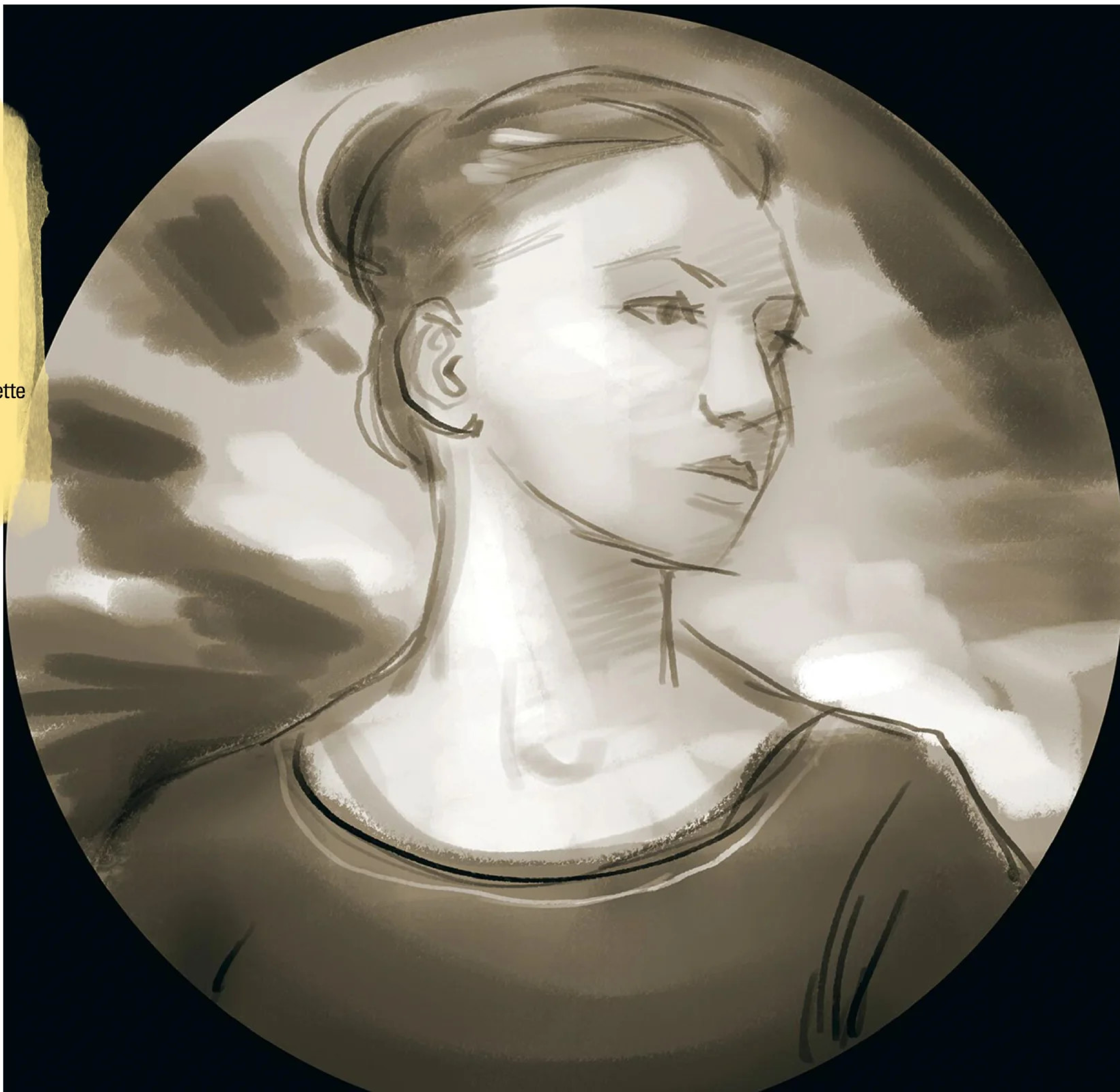
I purchase a large roll of raw linen. It's a cost-effective way to work on linen, but it does take some time and effort to prepare. Golden's GAC 100 is a great adhesive and comes in a decent-sized container, and will glue linen to wood, metal and plastic.

2 Apply a ground

Once the linen is glued down to the panel, I coat it with GAC 100 as well to protect the linen from the acidity of the oil primer. I like the slight tinting of Holbein's Foundation Umber. It's lead based, so use with care. I apply it with a palette knife to achieve the texture I want.

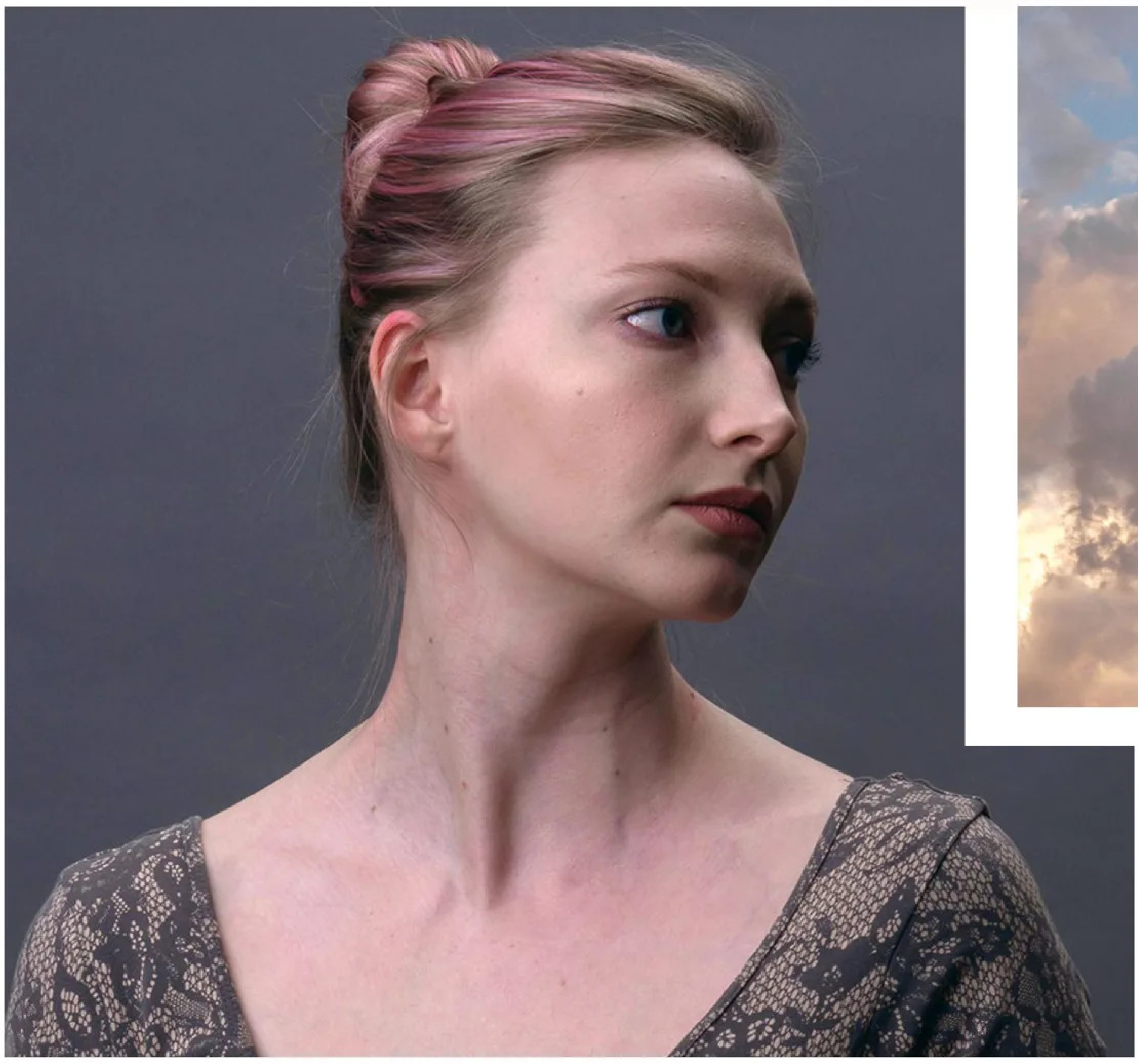
Materials

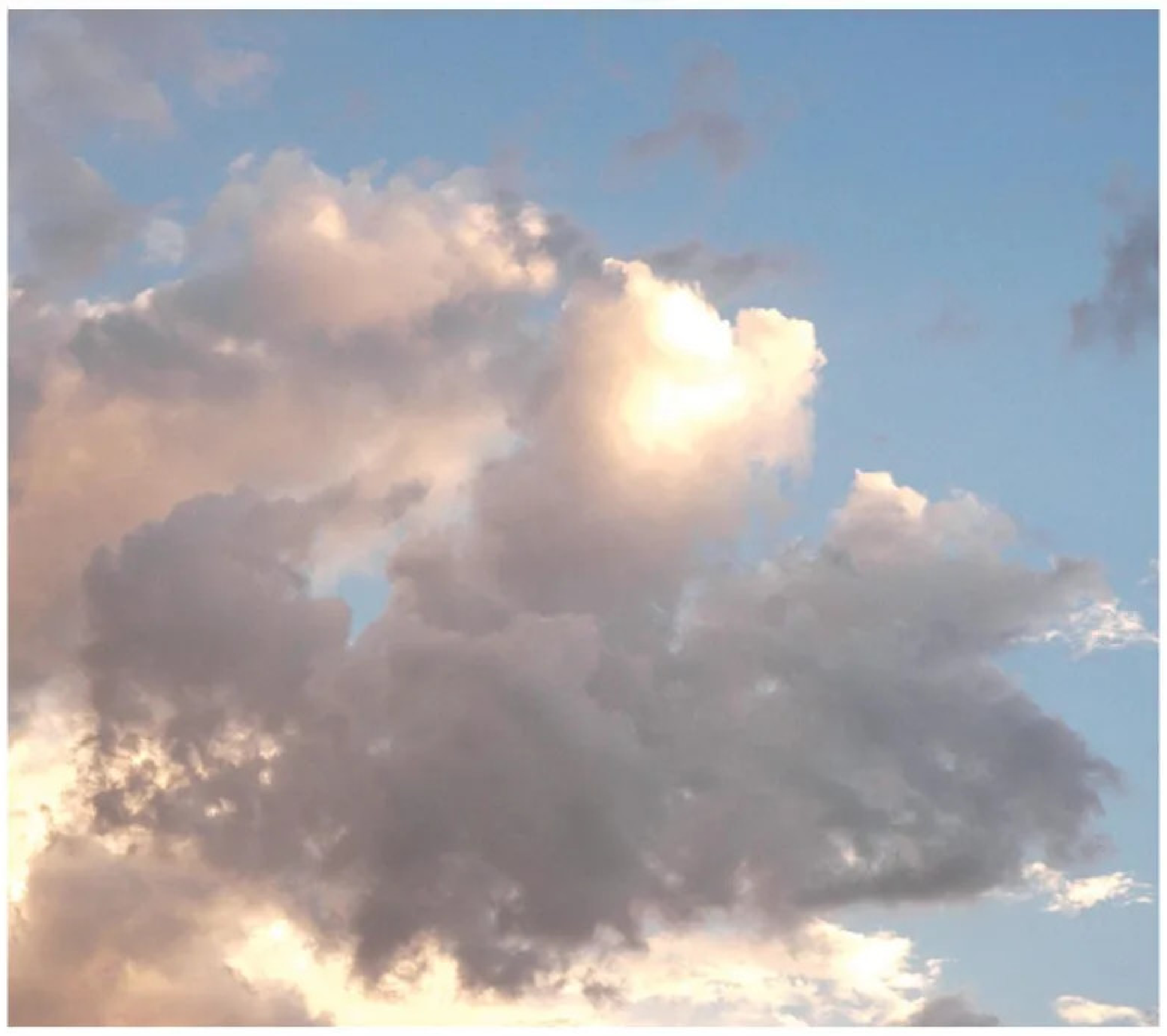
- ☐ Utrecht Gamblin oils
- ☐ Holbein Foundation Ground oils
- ☐ Utrecht Gamblin gamsol
- ☐ Rublev Colors oleogel
- ☐ Rosemary & Co Artist Brushes
- ☐ Linen for surface
- ☐ New Wave artist's wooden palette
- ☐ Goldens GAC 100 adhesive
- ☐ Sony a6500 camera
- ☐ Paul Buff Digibee strobe lights



3 Thumbnail the idea

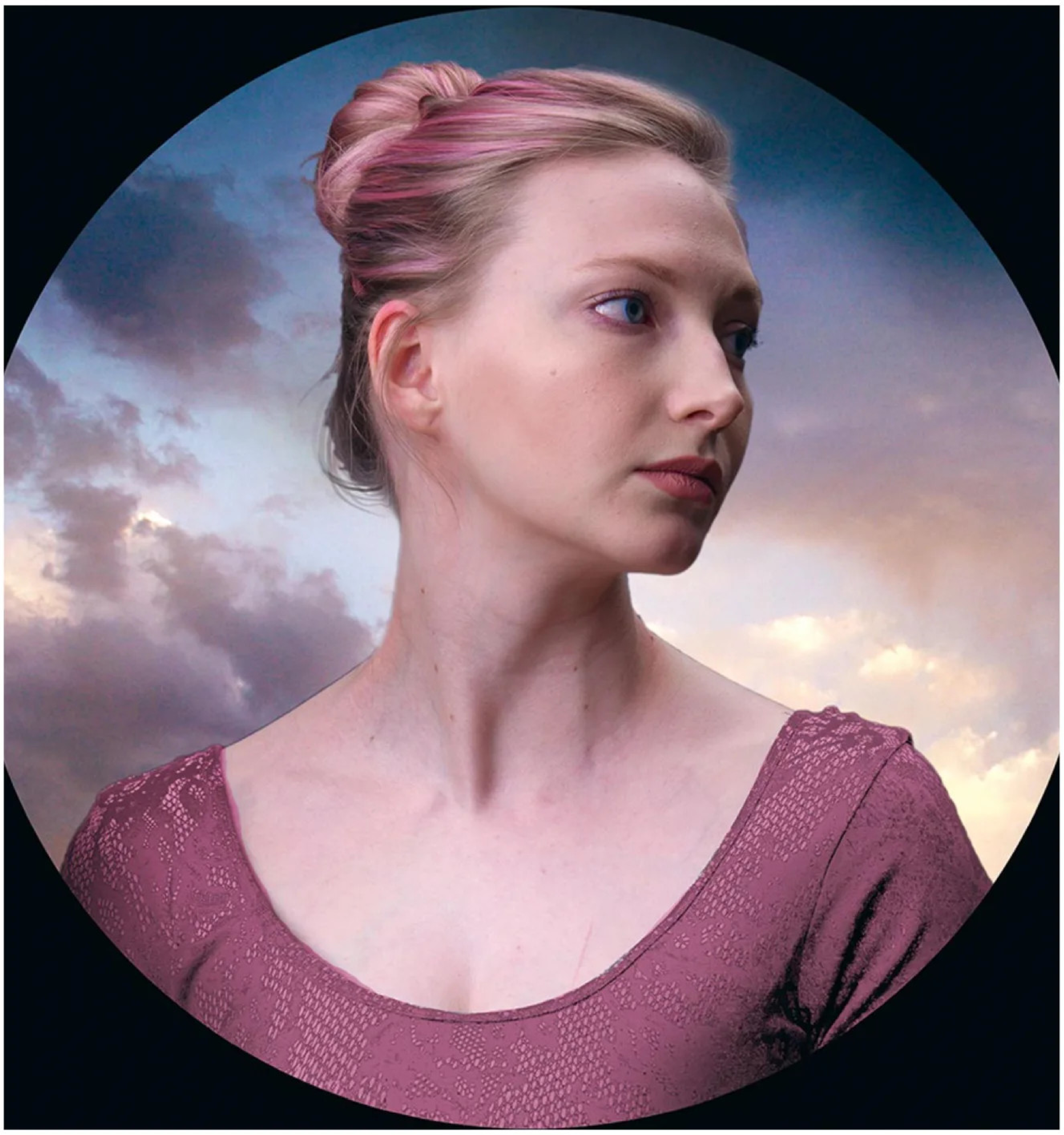
I think the thumbnails might be the most important step in the process. Don't skimp on this step. Do dozens of thumbnails as you explore your idea. Don't worry if they're ugly. Just get your ideas down. You can produce simple line drawings or work with big shapes. I tend to do a combination of both.





4 Gather reference

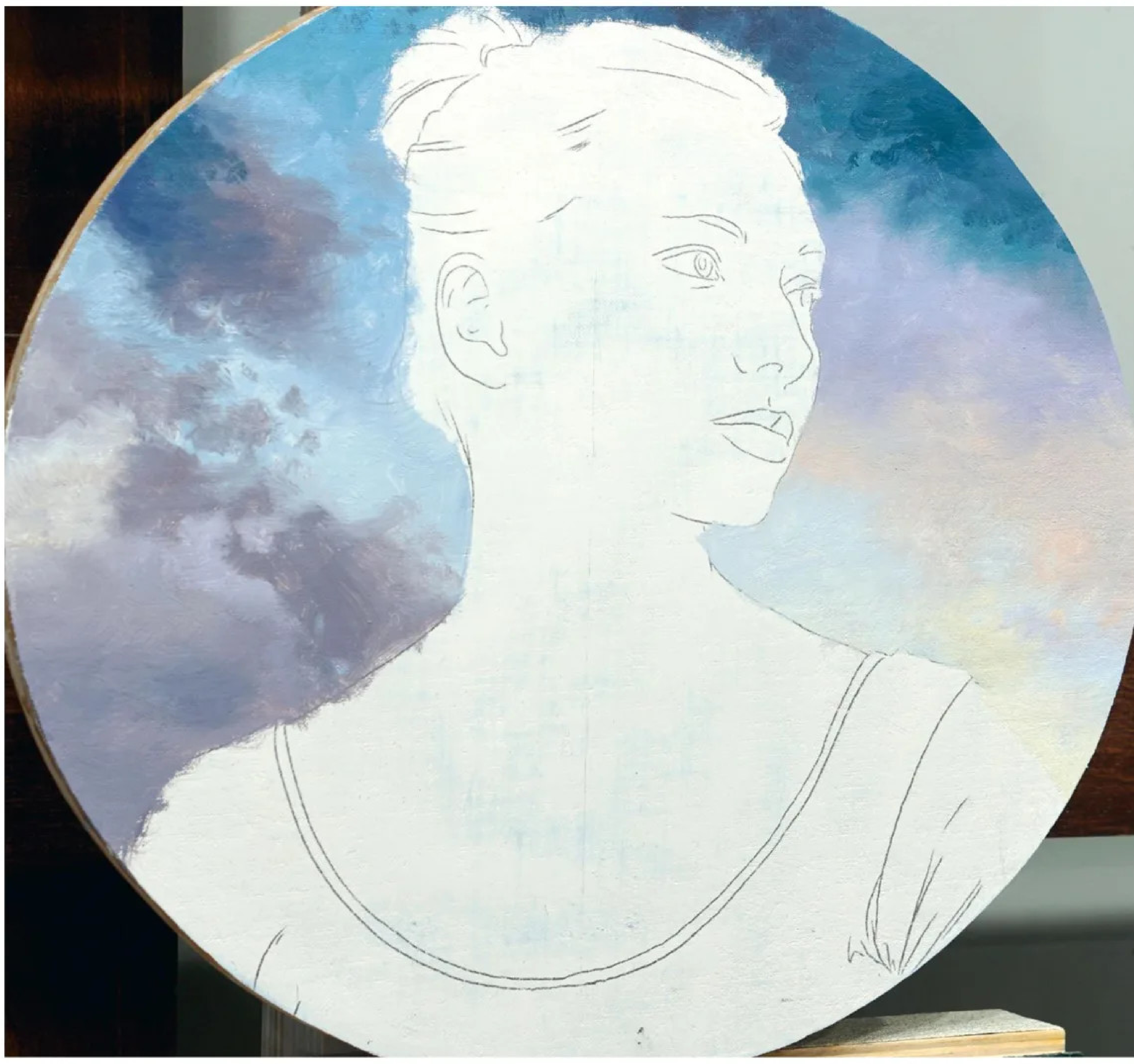
I'm always looking for models and references, which means bringing my camera with me as much as possible. You never know when you'll see the perfect cloud, tree or texture. I used two flashes in this shoot to provide a subtle rim light in addition to the main light.



5 Create a digital comp

Photoshop is ideal for exploring your composition. It's based on my thumbnail, but brings together the images from my photoshoot and reference. I don't think you can overdo this stage. The better the reference, the stronger your foundation will be for your final work.

> "The better the reference, the stronger your foundation will be for your final work"

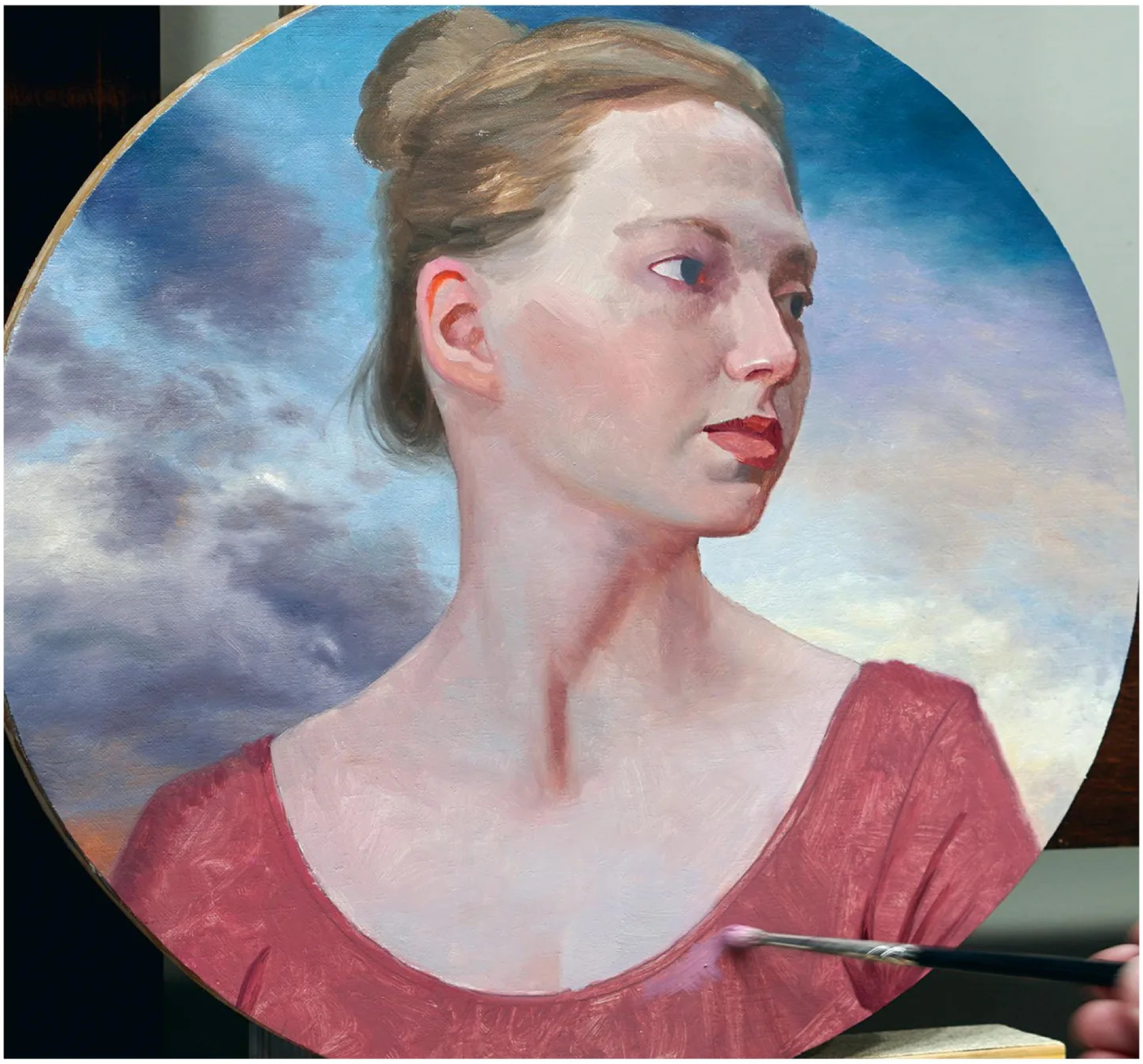


6 Choose your tools

With a few exceptions, almost all my brushes are from Rosemary & Co, and my artist's palette is from New Wave. It enables me to hold a nice range of colours including the Radiant colours produced by Gamblin. I try to have warm and cold versions of each colour and the Radiants are convenient for the higher values.

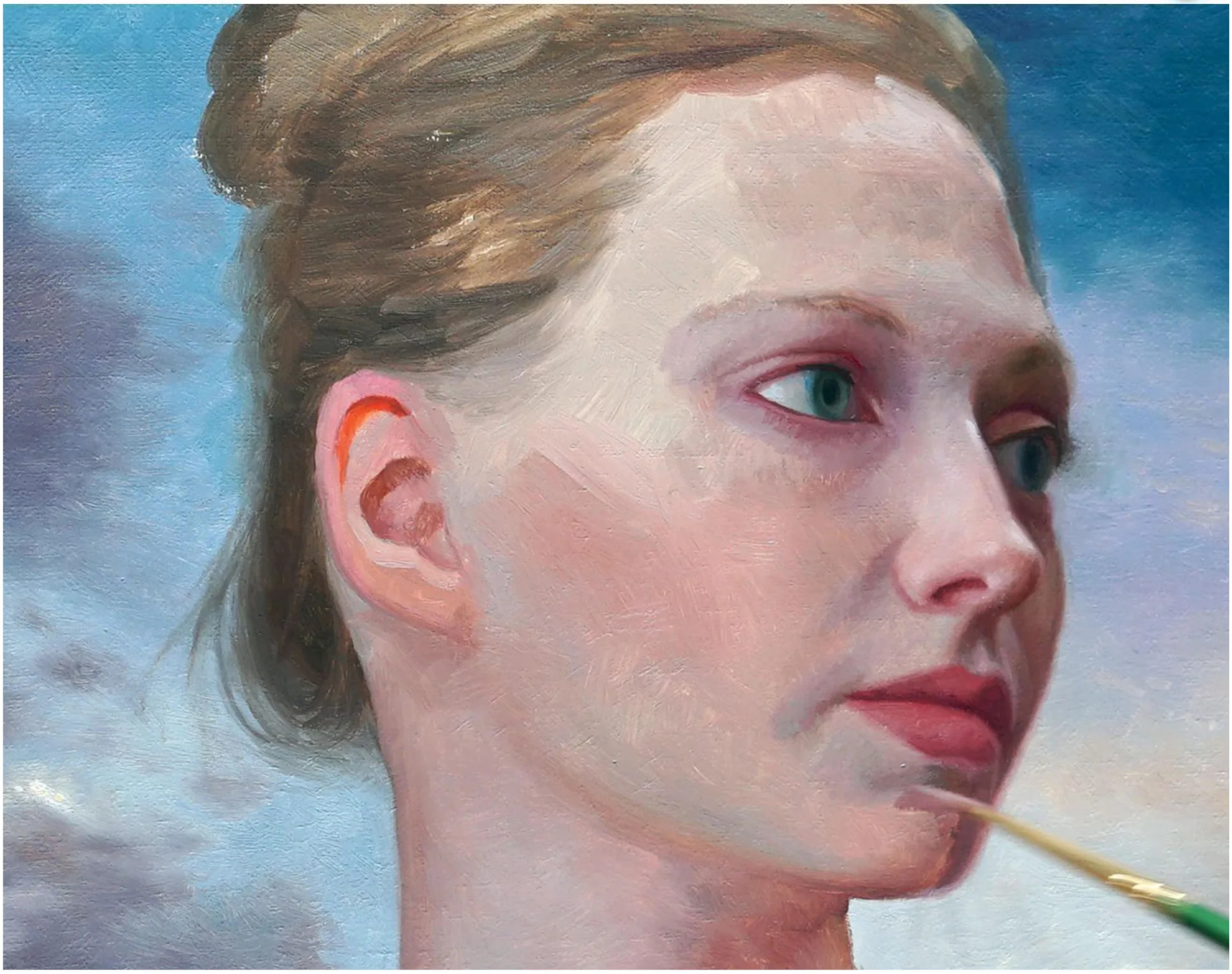
7 Block in the sky

Once I've drawn the composition directly on the canvas, I start by doing a quick colour block-in. I try to be very accurate with my colour, but I hold back just a bit with the darkest and lightest values, saving those for the finishing stage. This enables me to make ongoing decisions about where I want the most contrast.



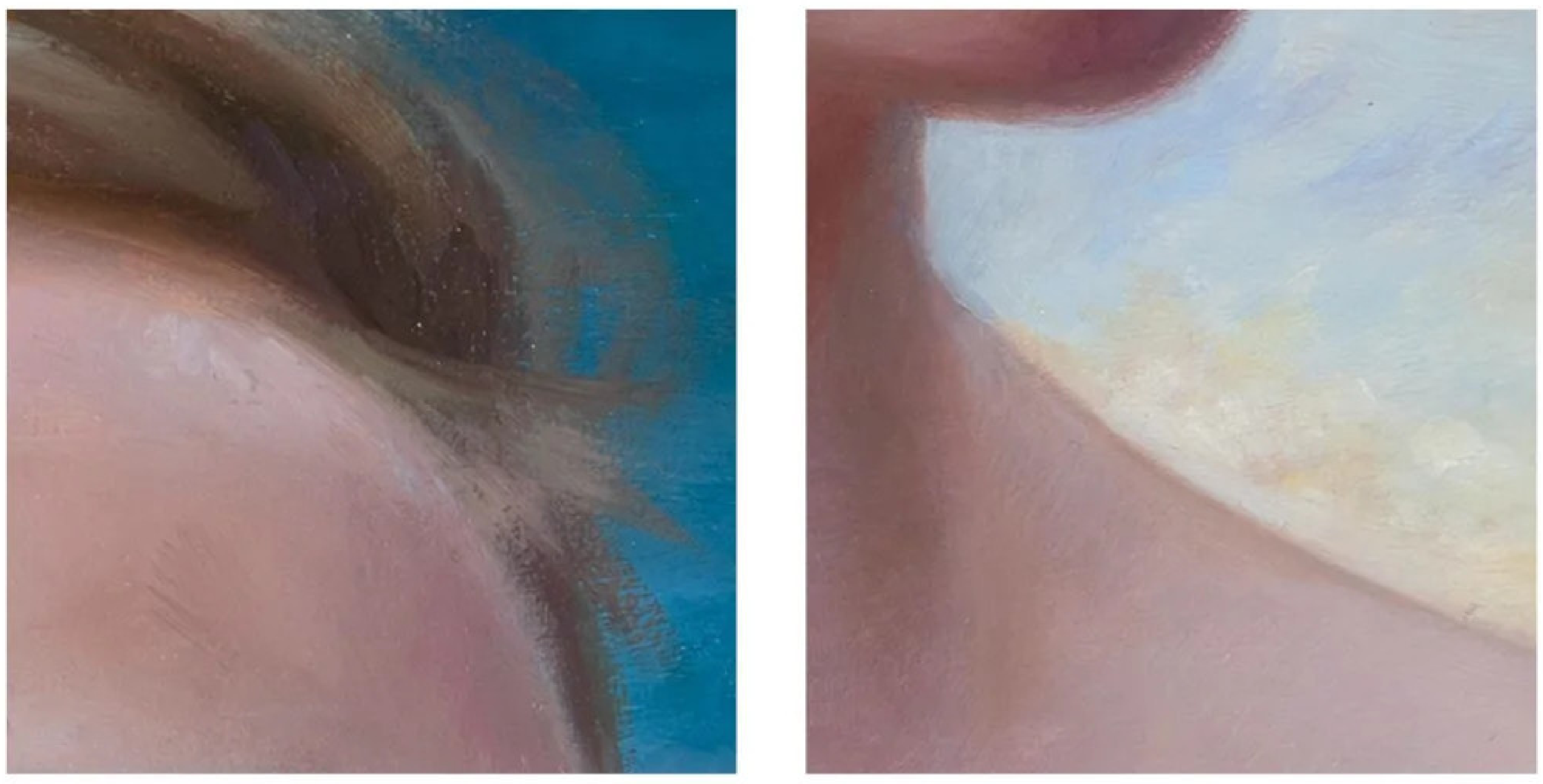
8 Put the parts together on the canvas

I call this the Frankenstein stage, because all the parts come together, but it isn't pretty. Don't panic! Don't overwork this stage. Layering oils will add depth and richness, but you don't want to try and finish the painting in the first pass. Learn to be efficient by doing this pass quickly and then build on it.



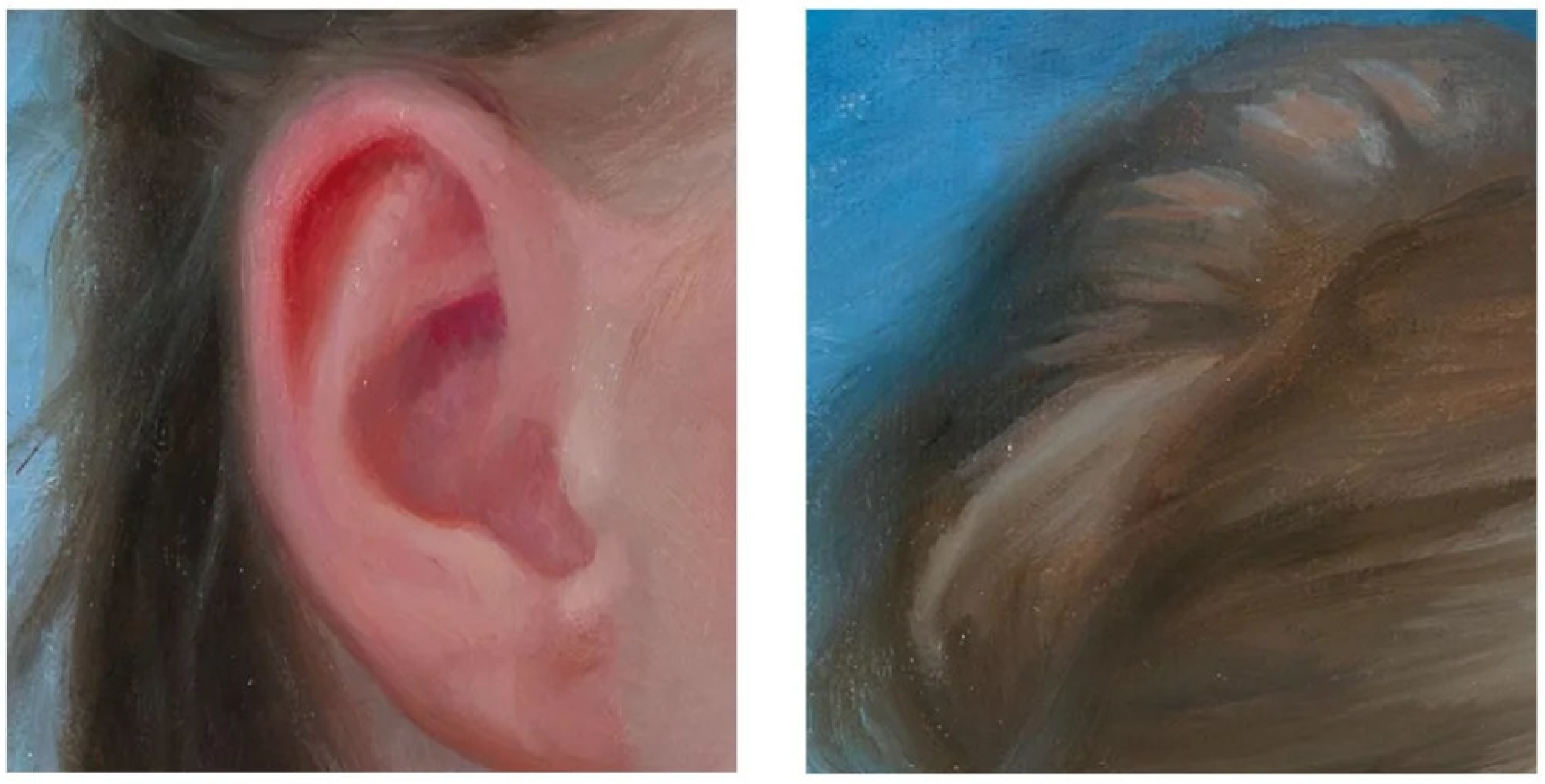
9 Second pass refinements

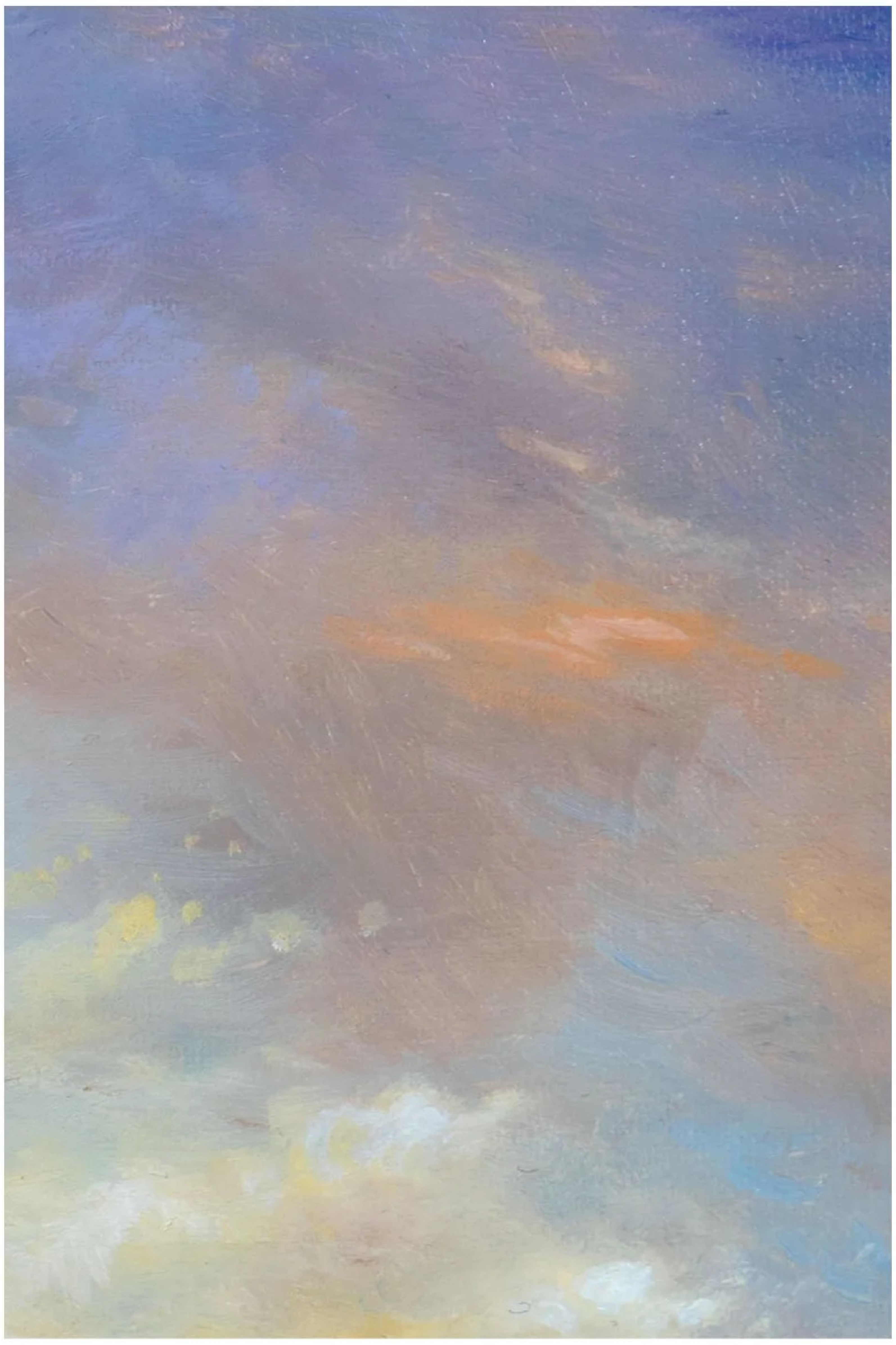
Now the fun begins and I start to push values to their full range. I like to do the first pass in one day if possible and let it dry overnight. Then you can work over the first pass without removing it. I love the second pass because each stroke, put down over the rougher first pass, brings polish and finish.

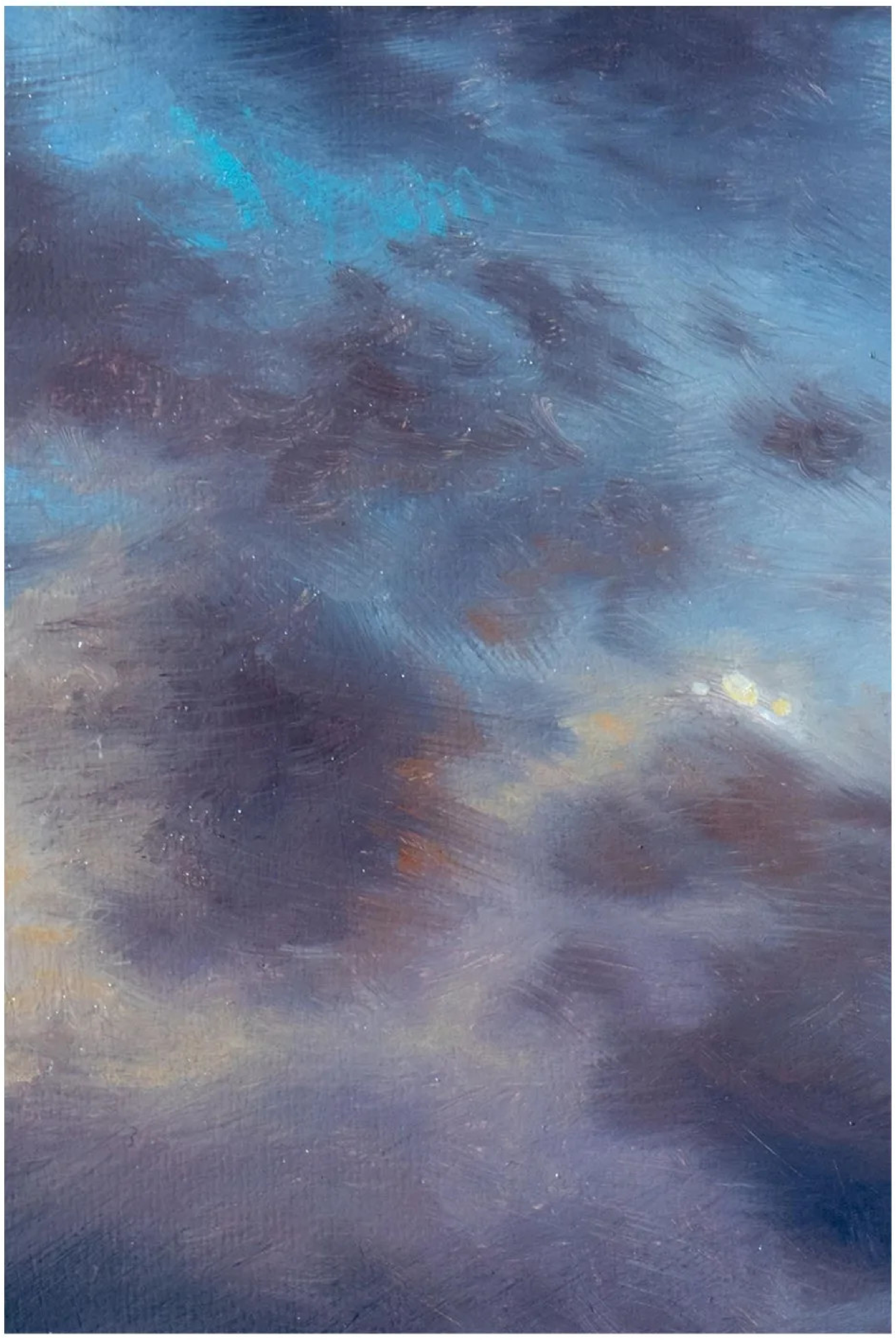


10 Edges equal vitality

Don't let all your edges be hard or soft. Contrast creates interest. Use soft edges to ensure your forms merge and turn, and use hard edges to advance forms and draw the eye. Note the softness of the hair generally, but there are a few harder strokes. The ear has a soft outer edge, but some harder internal edges.





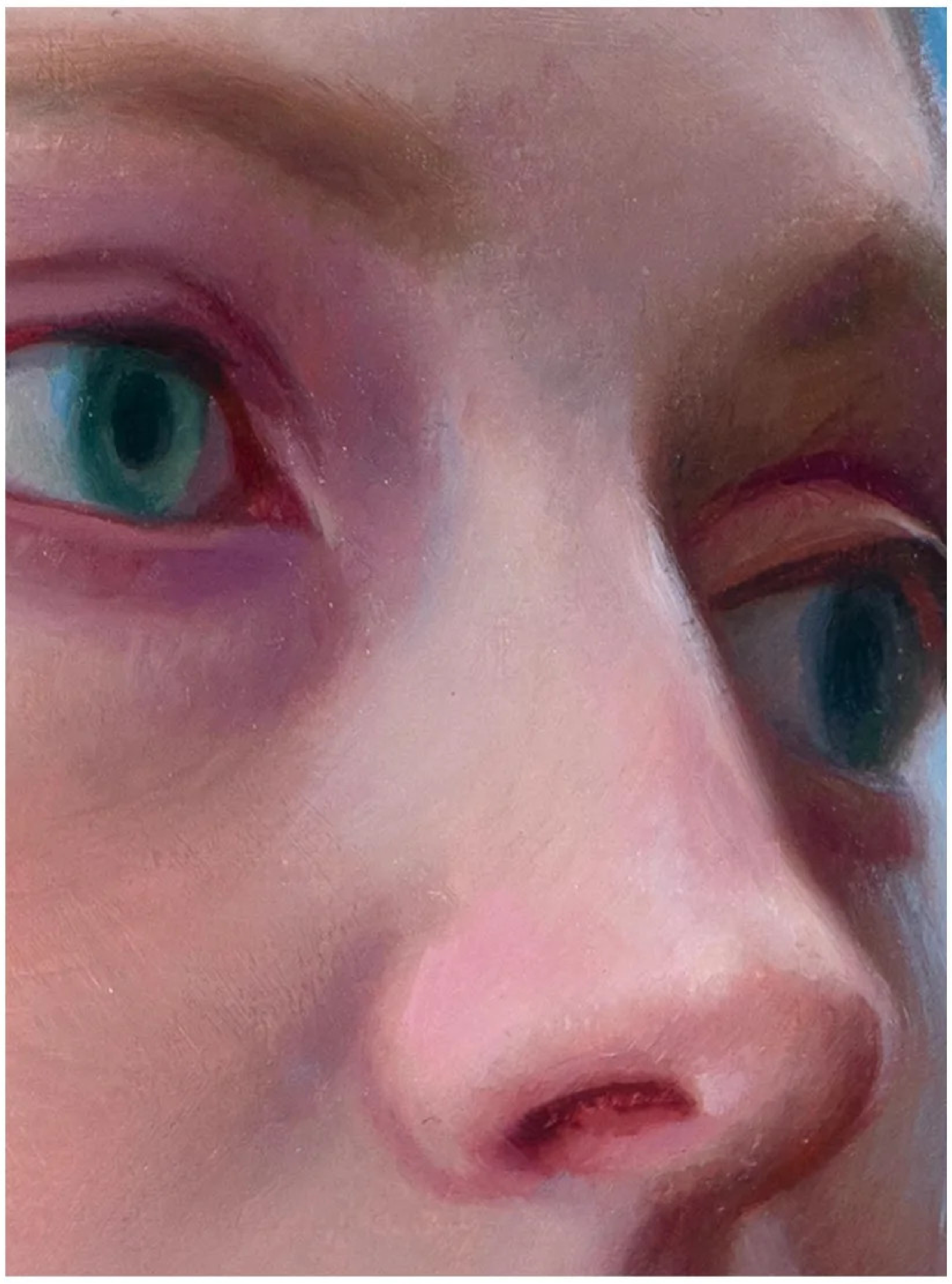


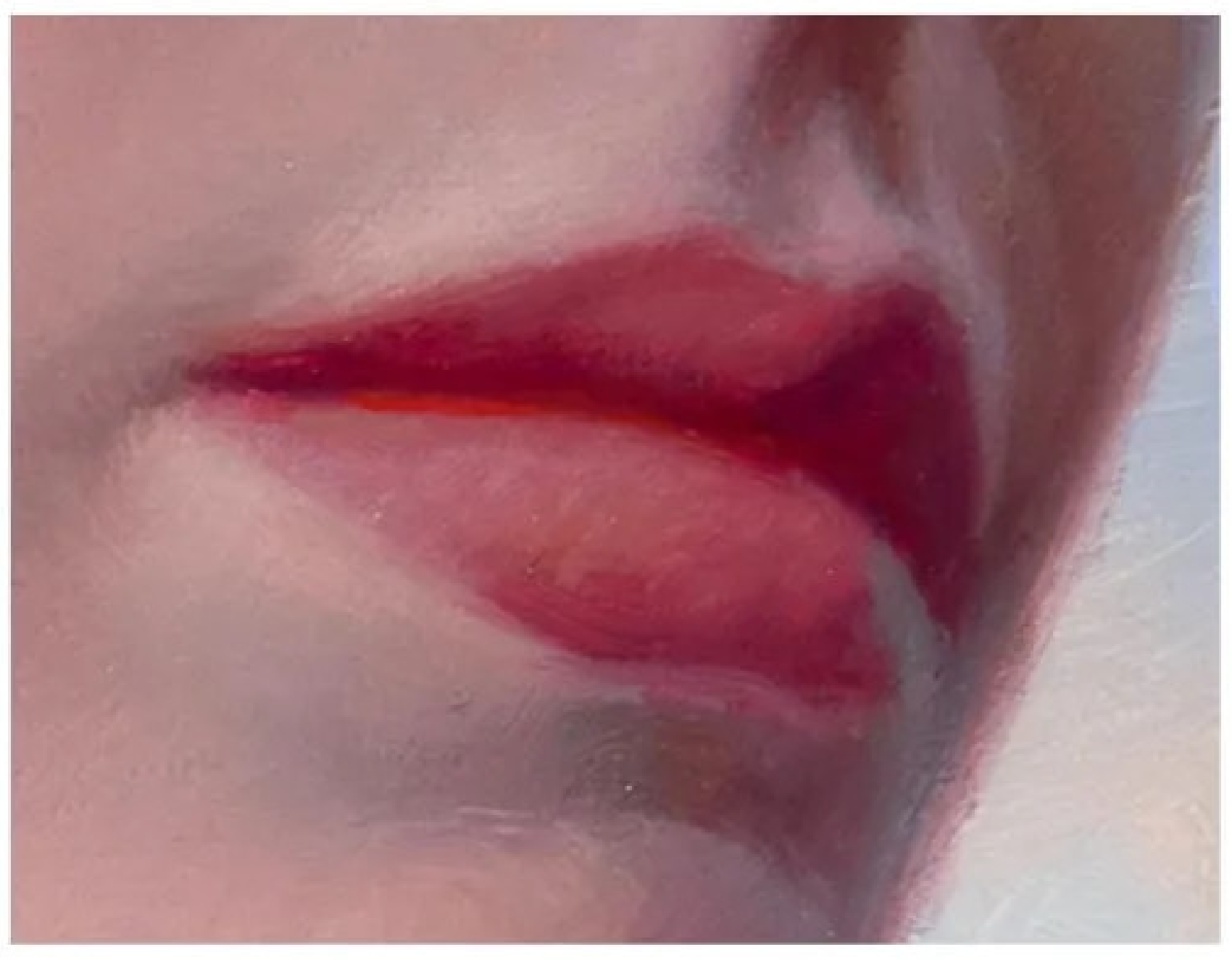
11 ▲ Clouds equal freedom within your composition

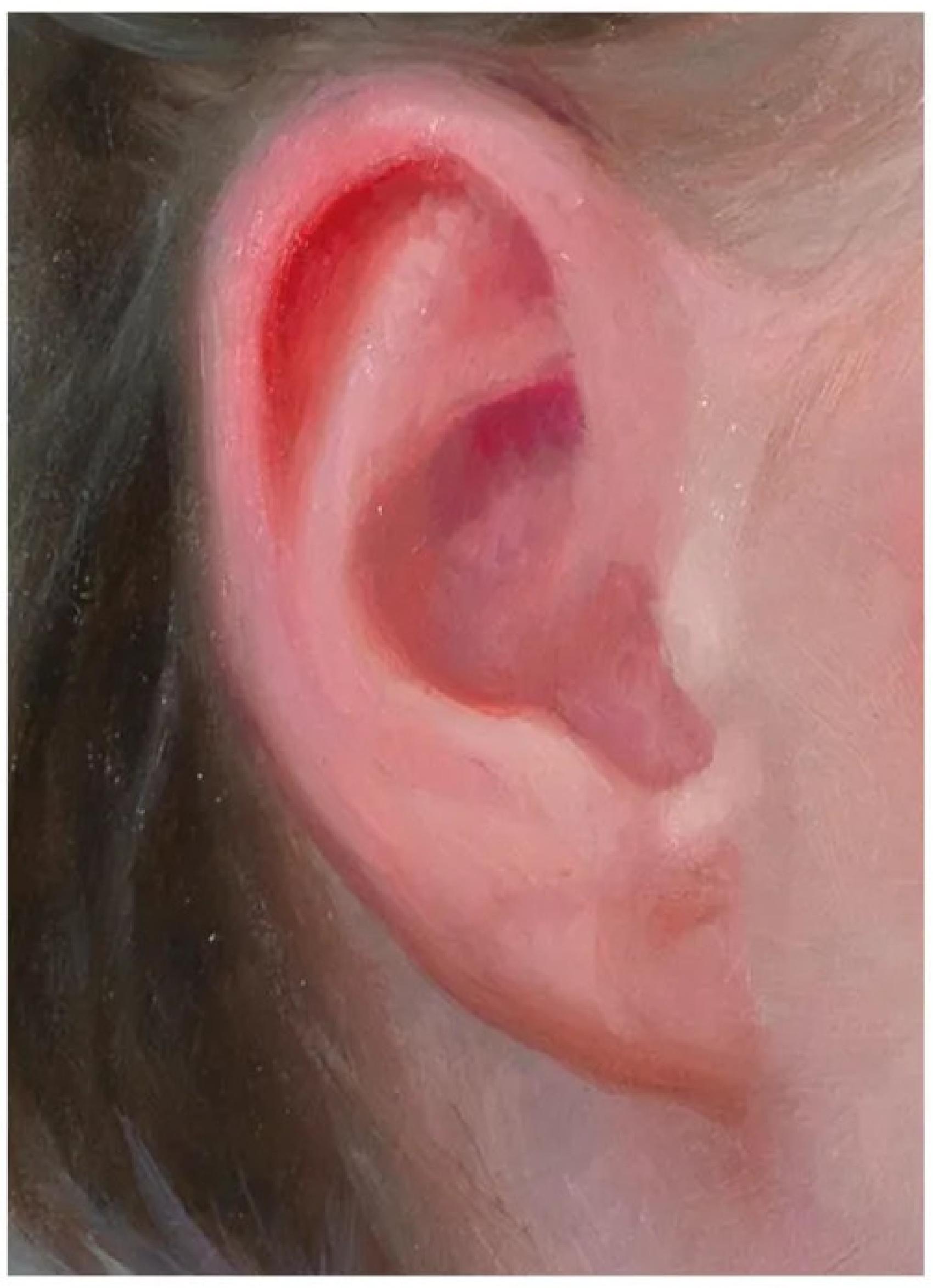
I love painting clouds. You can make them almost any colour and value. They can create whatever shape you need to complement your design. I put them in rough at first and then use a soft brush, like Rosemary & Co's Masterstroke long flats to blend them.

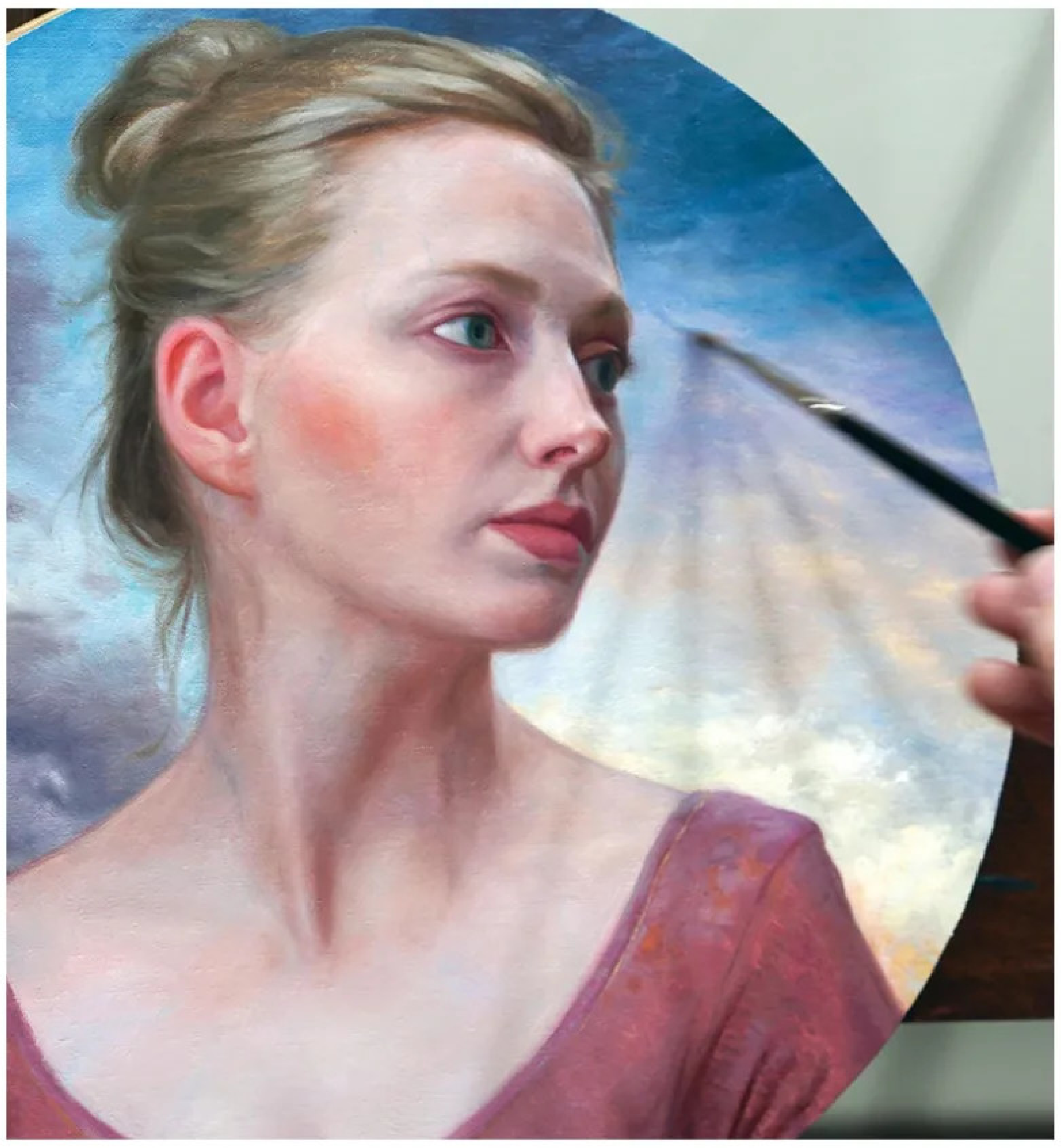
12 ▶ Render the face

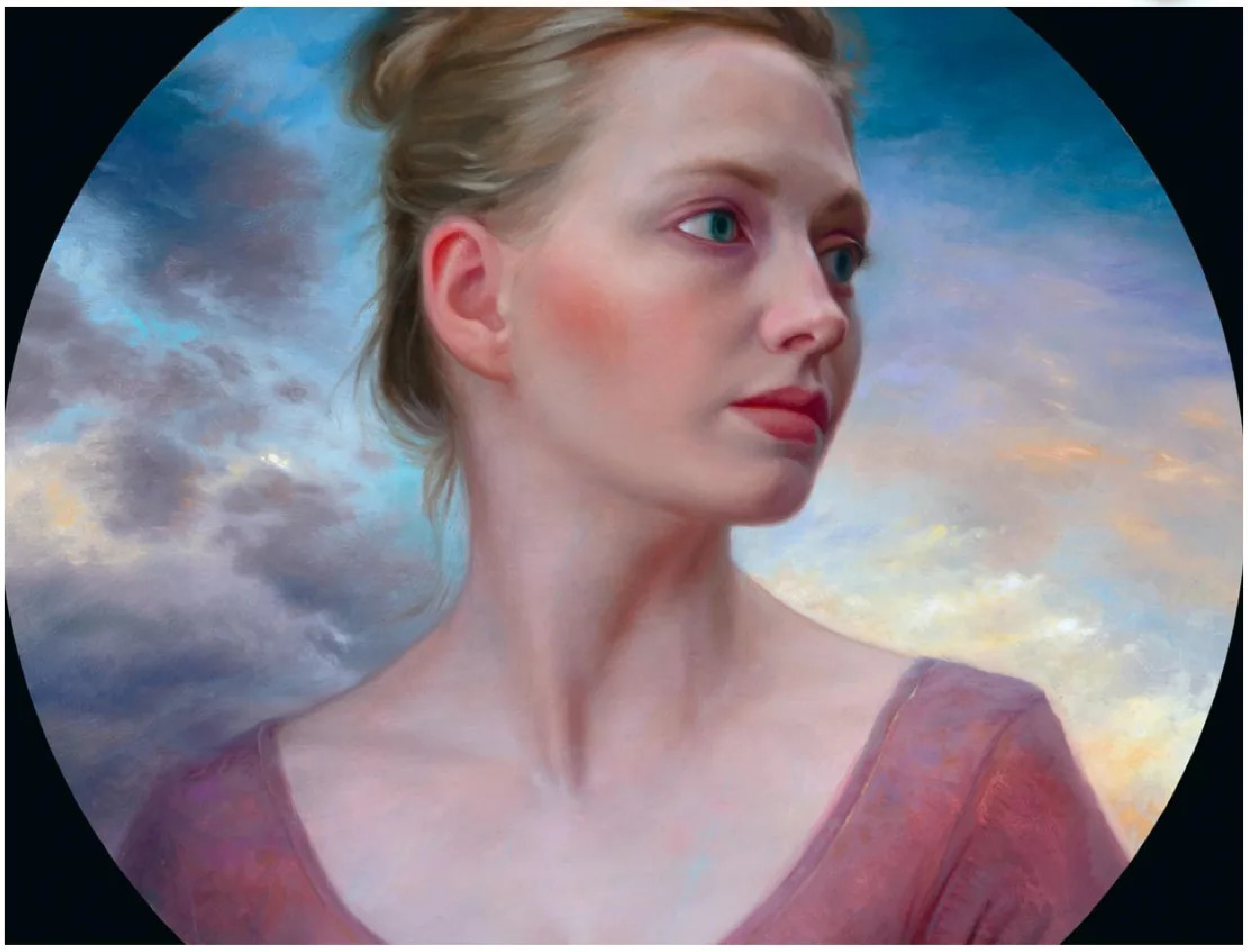
Keep the warmth in the skin. Note where skin touches skin, or is translucent. This is where you'll get your highest points of saturation in flesh. Look at the light bouncing through, or within the ear and nose. In addition, the line where the lips meet can often have very intense warm and cool reds.









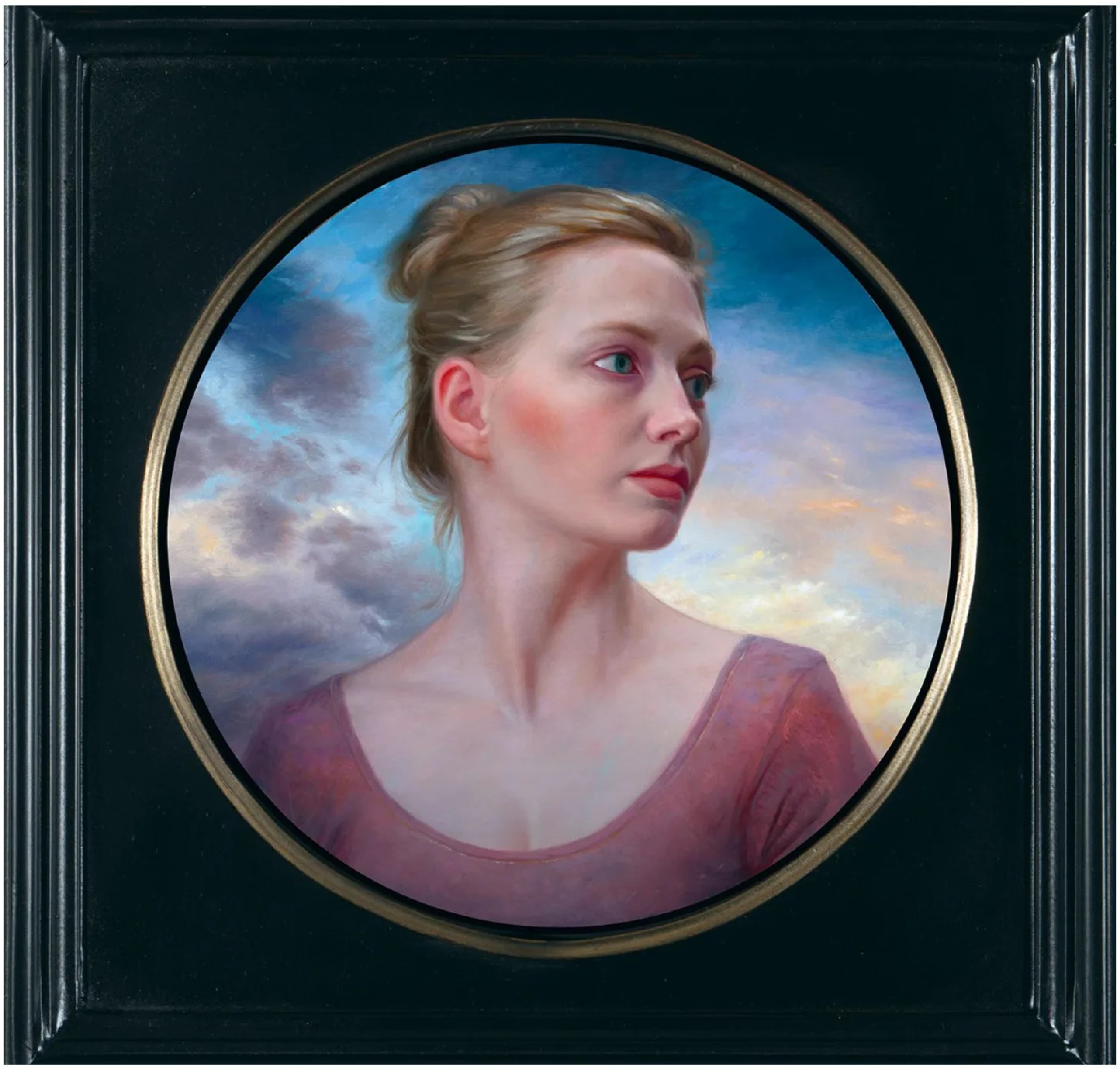


13 Finishing touches

At this stage I like to put my reference away and make my decisions based on what I think would enhance the painting. It's often this last five to 10 per cent of work that really makes the painting come together. I like to add spots of intense colour, and refine edges and values.

14 Assess your work

When you decide that the painting is complete, take some time to review your efforts. Compare it to your inspiration and let yourself be critical and kind. Identify your successes and shortcomings so that you can apply that experience to your next painting. Learning and improving is one of the great pleasures in life!



15 Choose a worthy frame

Nothing is sadder than a great work, poorly framed. Find a good framer and they can take a good painting and make it great. In this case, Michael Graham at Masterworks Frames created this beautiful custom frame with 16k gold leafing. He also cut the panels for the frame where they 'float' when mounted with velcro.

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

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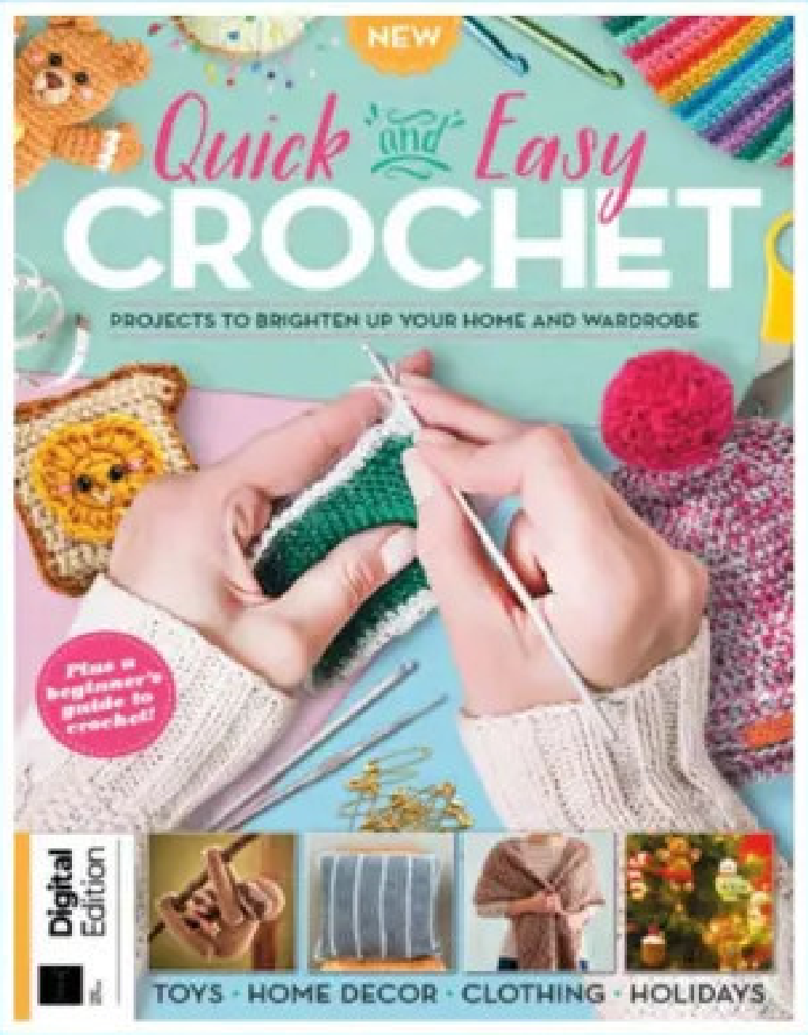
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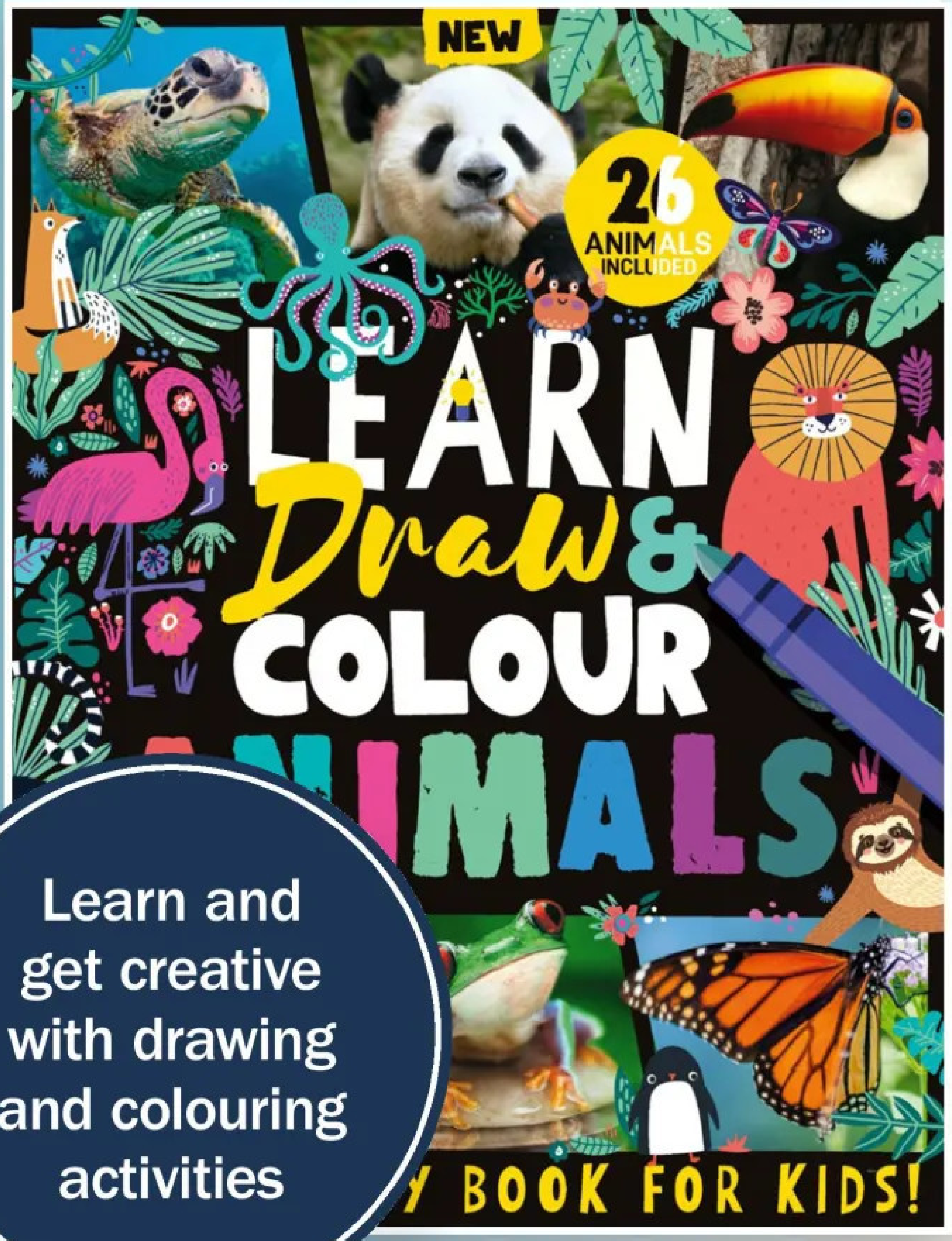
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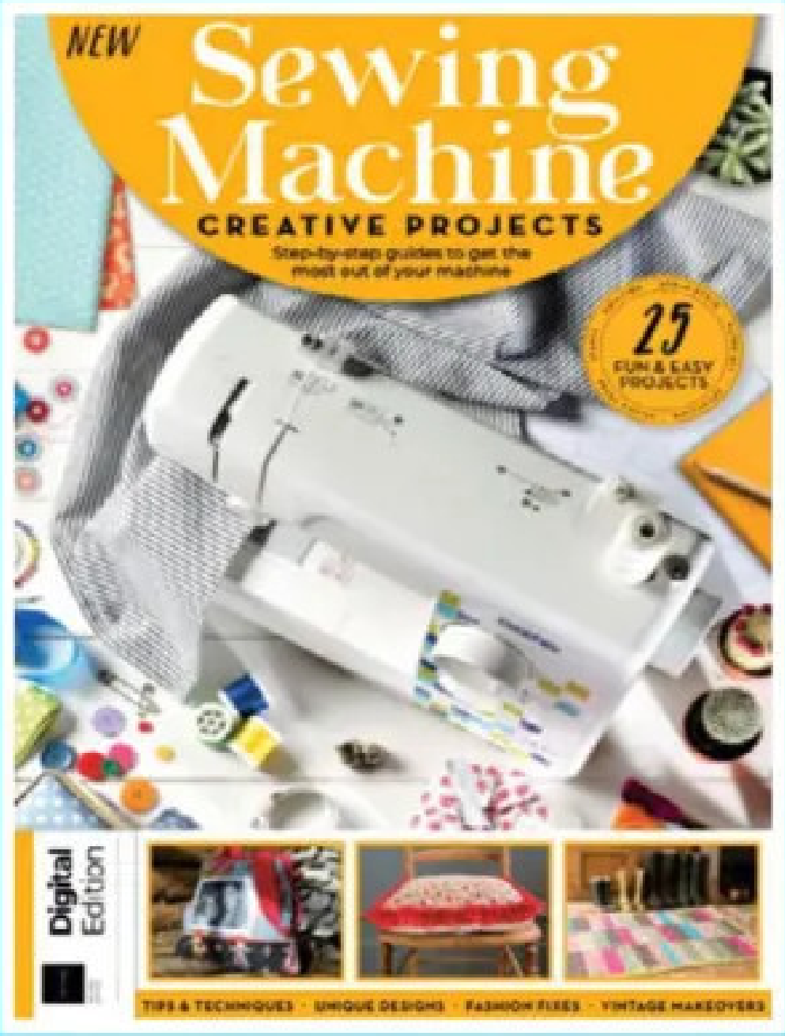
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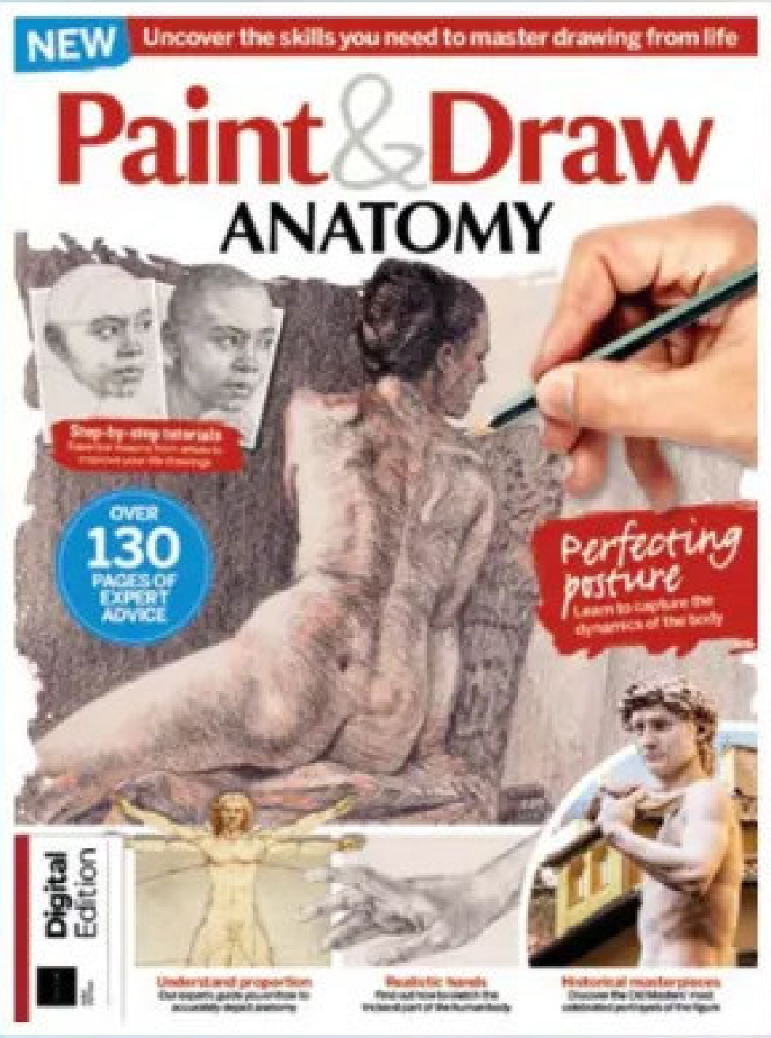
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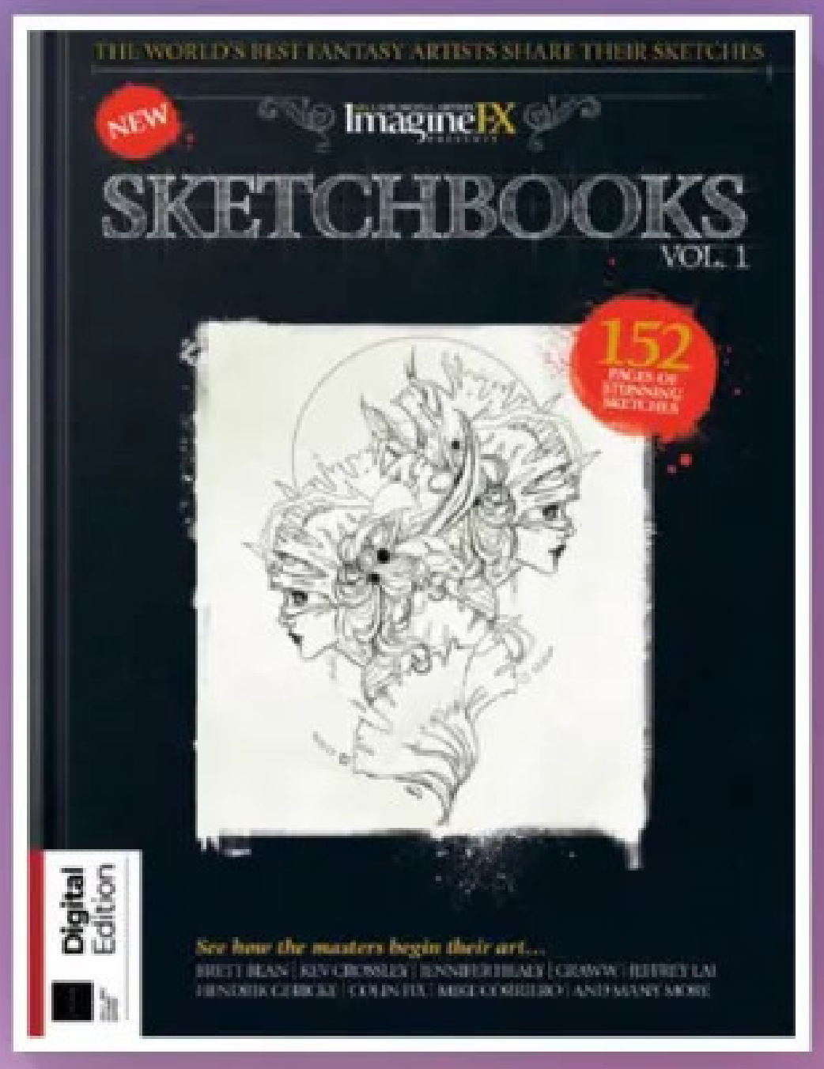
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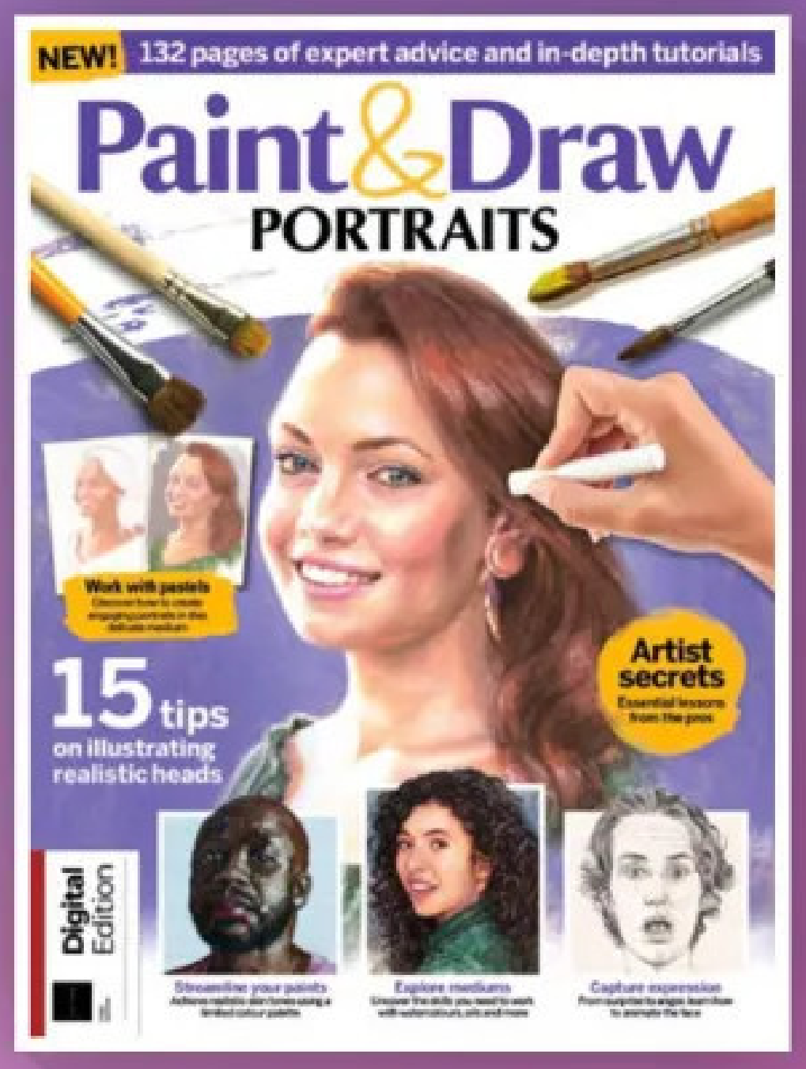
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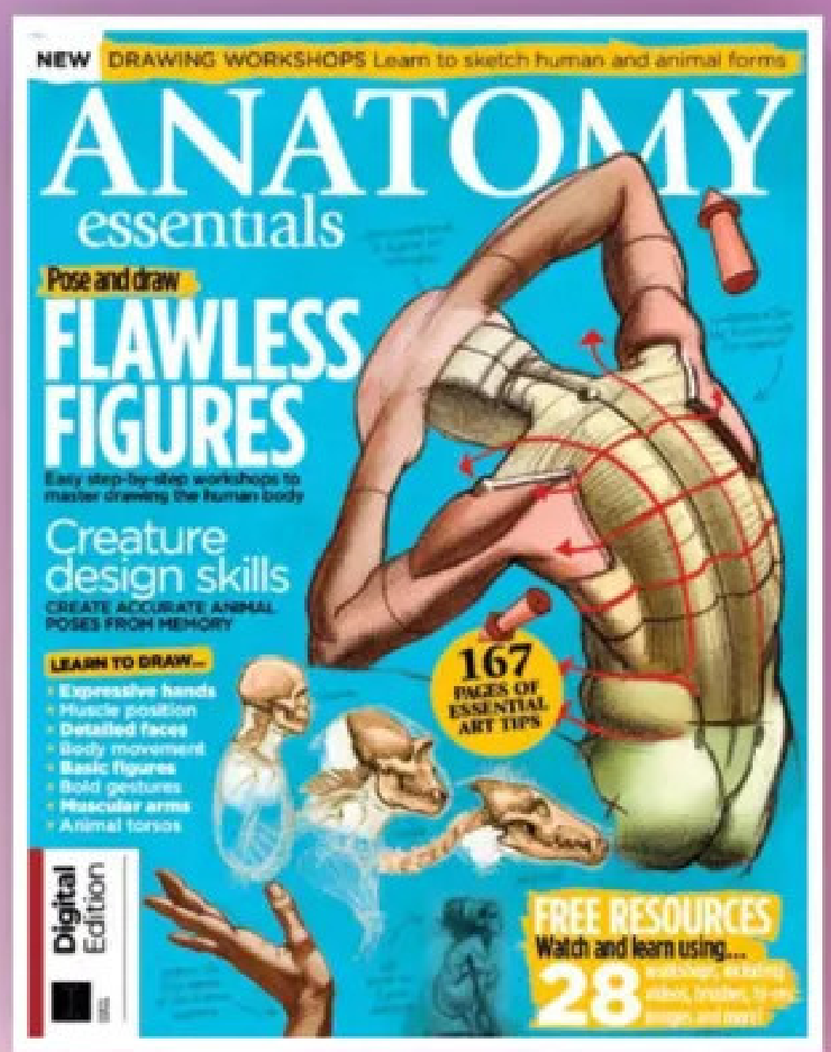
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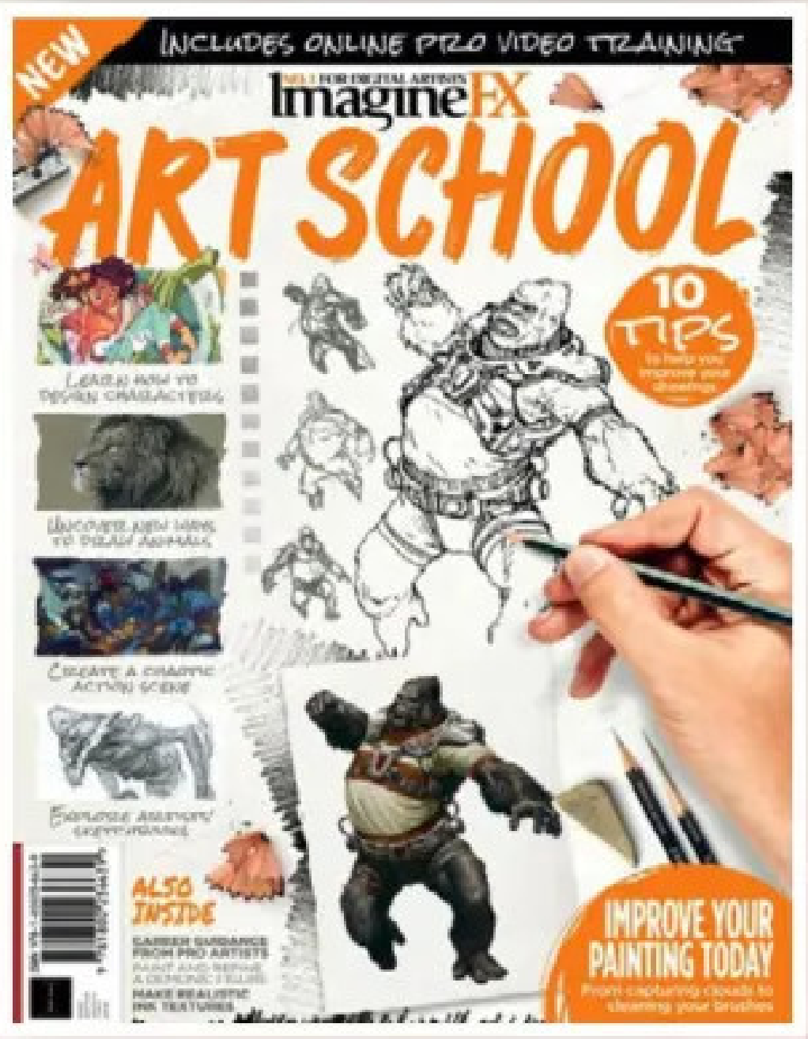
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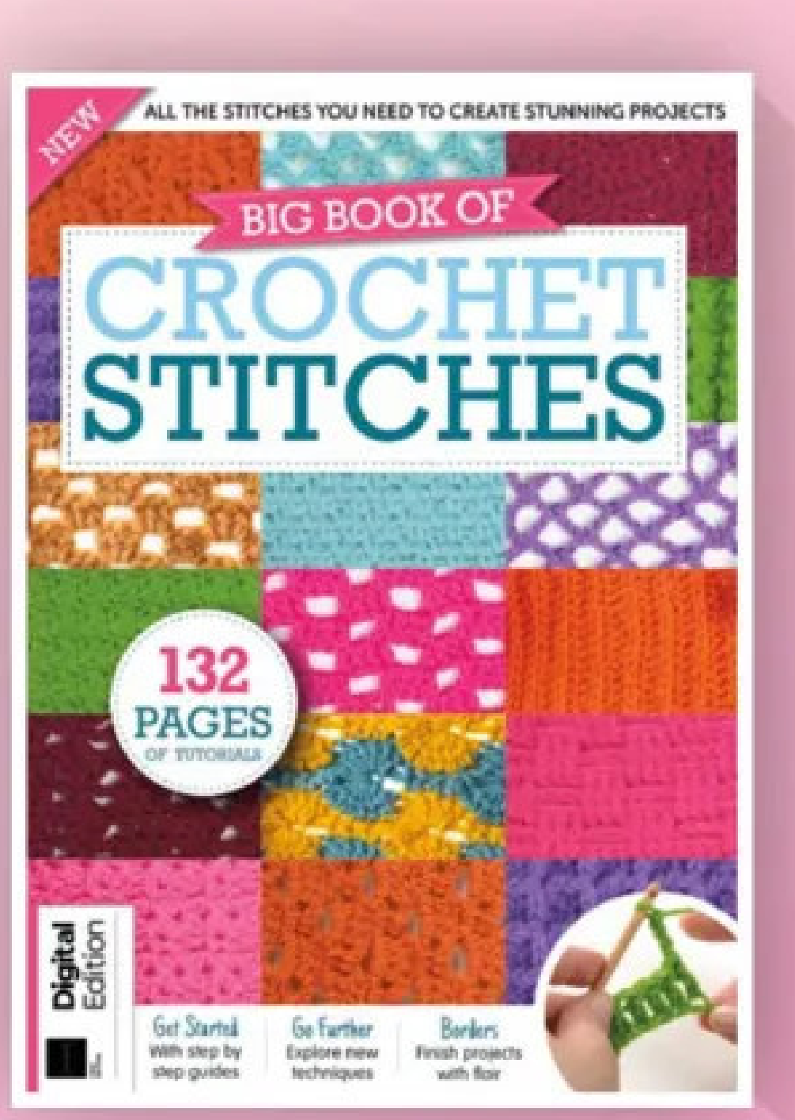
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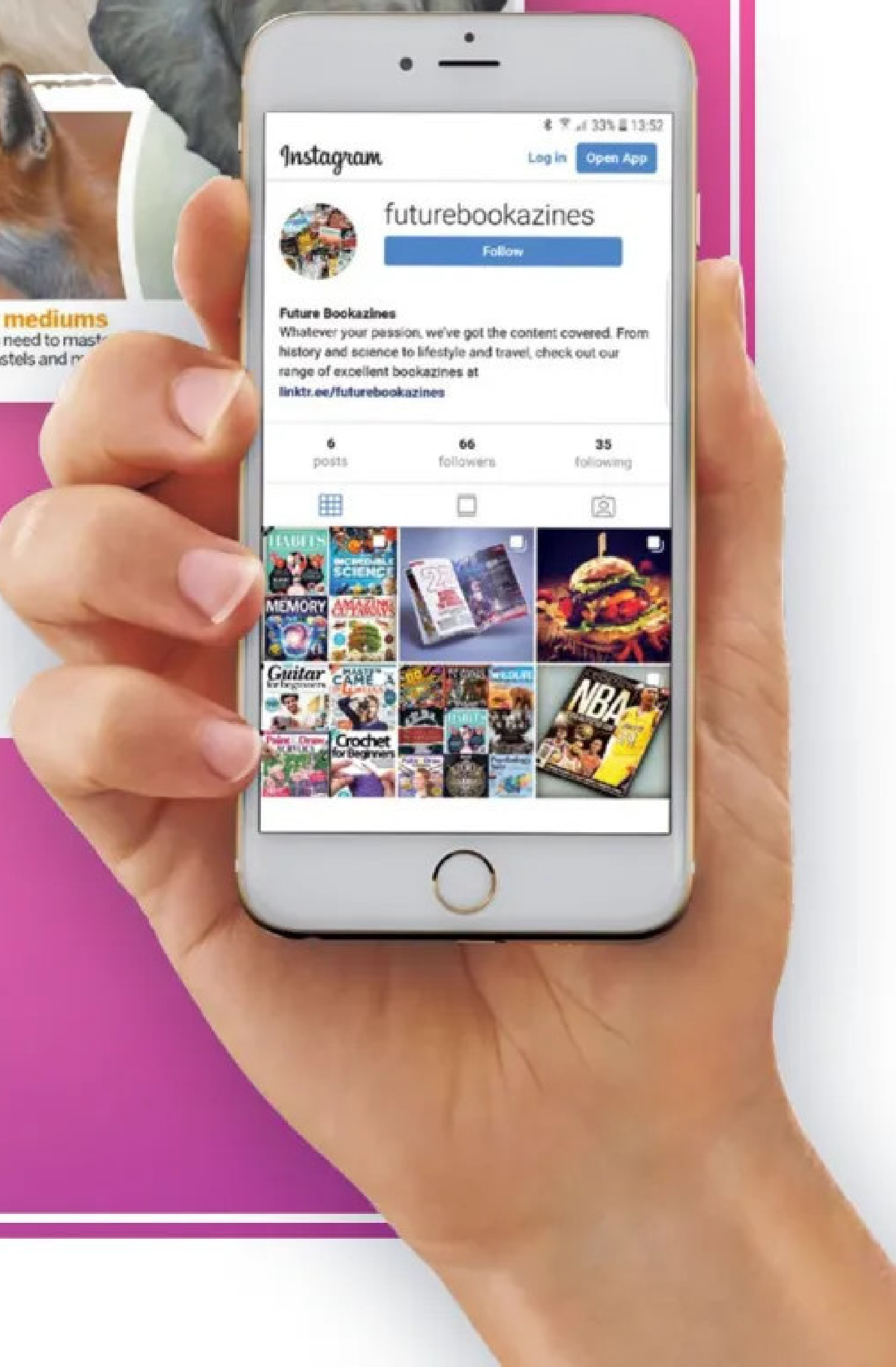
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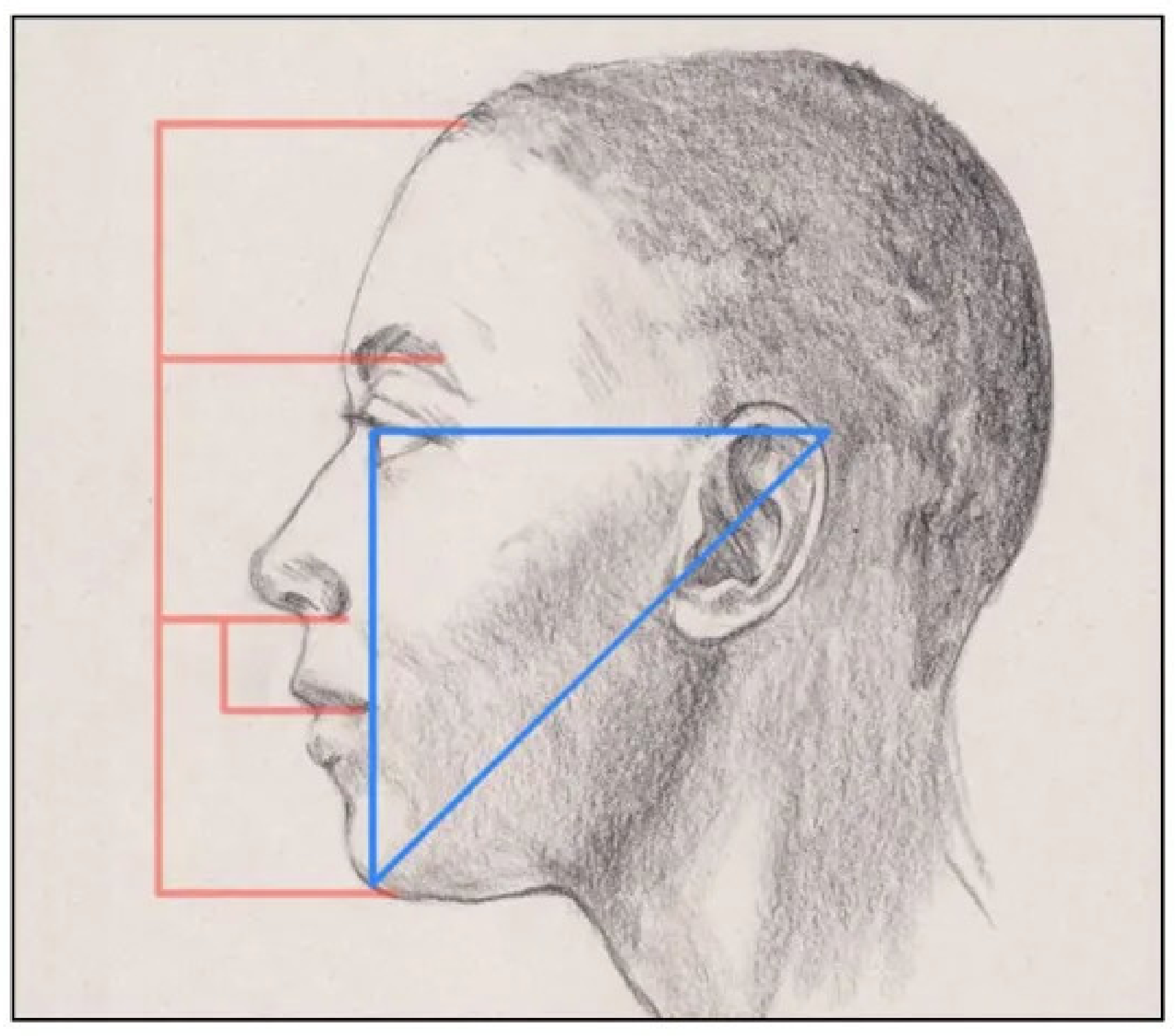

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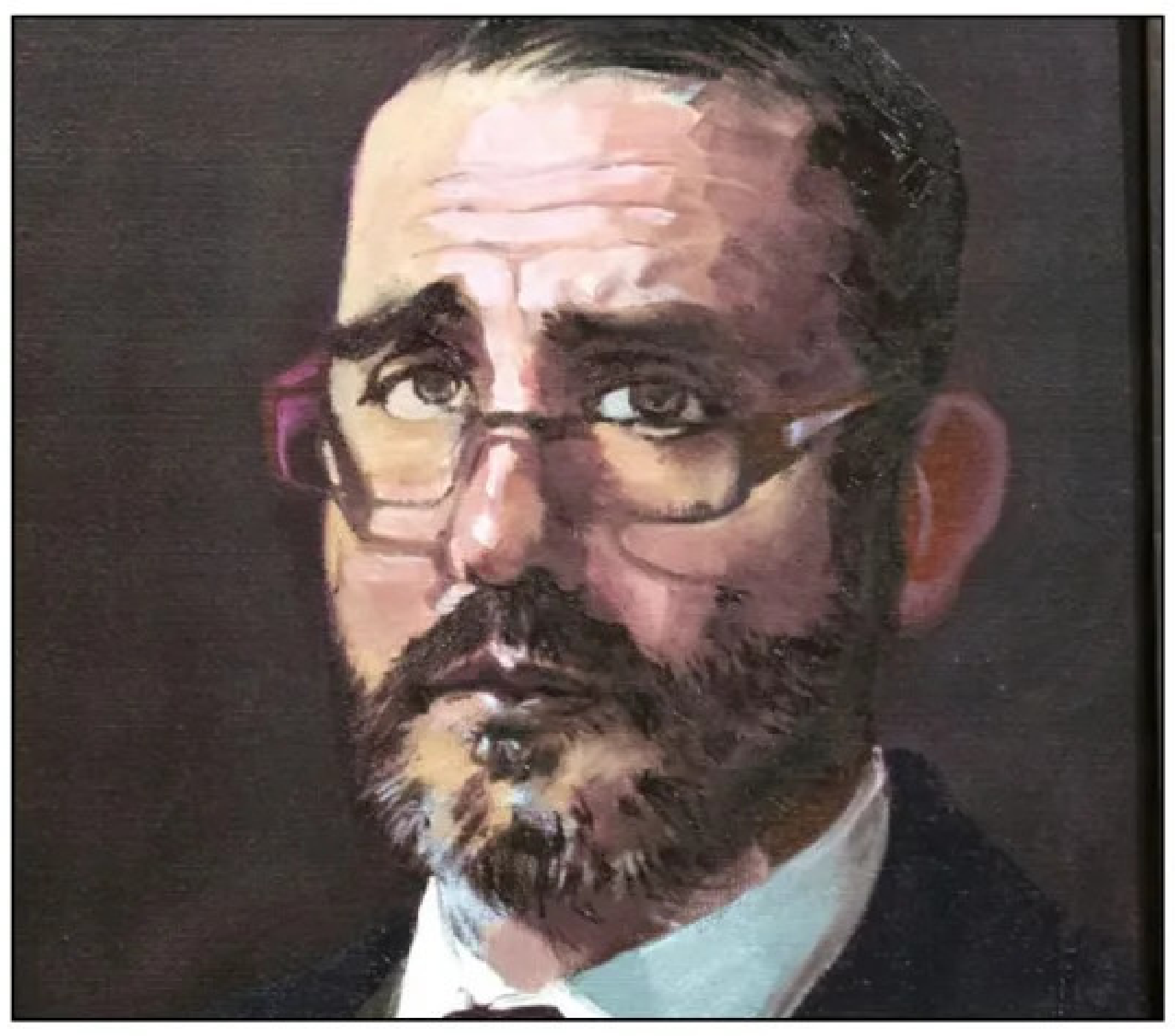

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